The "Holy Works of Appalachia" • Farm Activist Dick Austin • Parting Shots from the Grave

NOW AND THEN

The Appalachian Magazine

Center for Appalachian Studies and Services/Institute for Appalachian Affairs
East Tennessee State University

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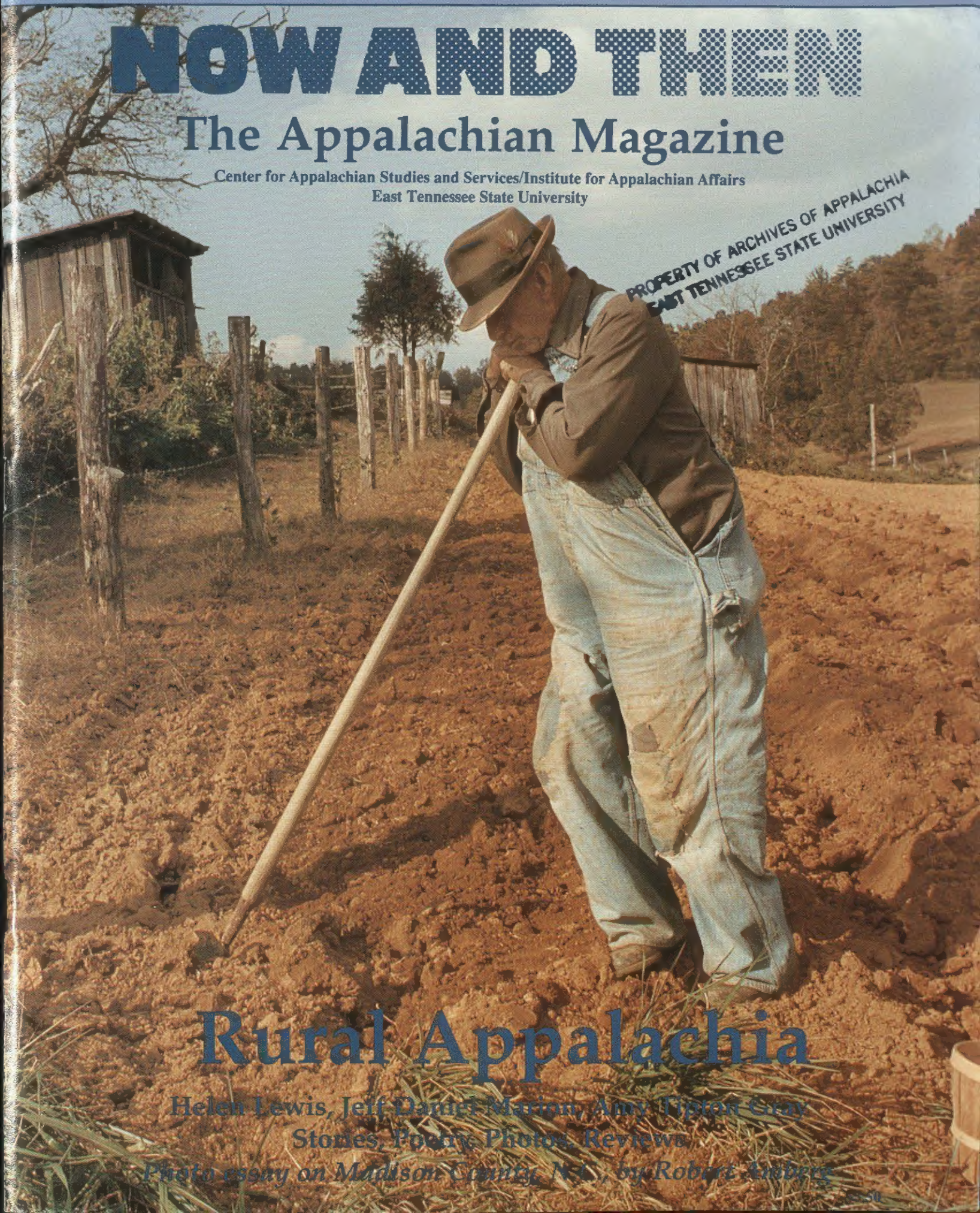

Rural Appalachia

Helen Lewis, Jeff Daniel Marion, Amy Tipton Gray

Stories, Poetry, Photos, Reviews

Photo essay on Madison County, N.C., by Robert Andrew

$5.50

Madison County, North Carolina

Photo essay by Robert Amberg

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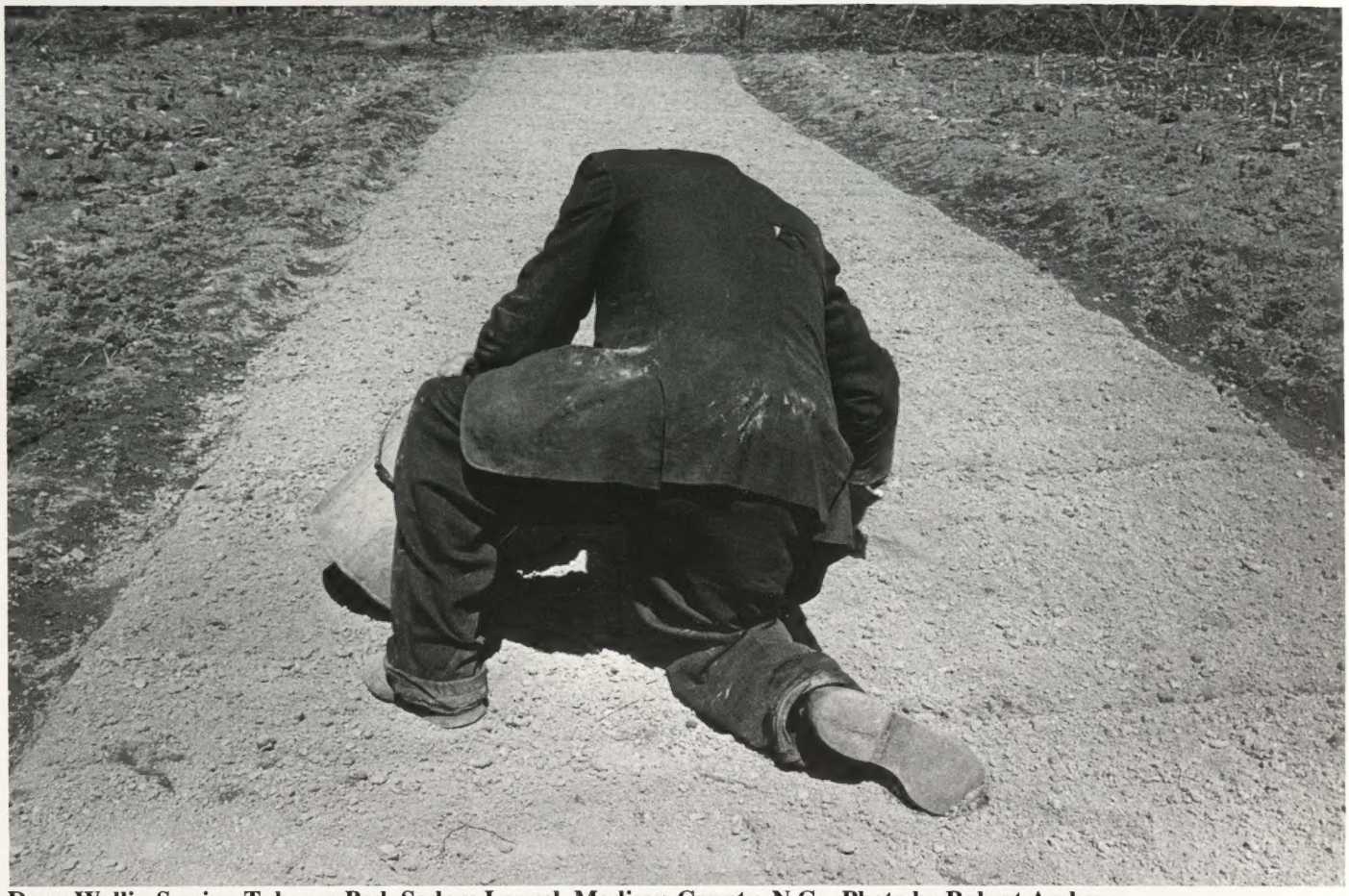

Doug Wallin Sowing Tobacco Bed, Sodom Laurel, Madison County, N.C. Photo by Robert Amberg.

Place Names

I was raised at Gimlet,
Bluebank, Poplar Plains,
Mudsock, and
Bald Hill.

On the waters of Sinking Creek,
Upper Tygart,
Caney, Fleming,
And Fox.

At Goddard,
Tilton,
And Hillsboro
I learned to read and write.

I played third base
At Plummer's Landing,
Muse's Mills,
Locust, Sharkey,
And Sunset.

Through Soldier,
Hogtown,
Beartown,
And Stark
We drove on Sunday morning.

So when they ask
Where are you from?
I say
God's country:
Nobody but Him
and us knows
how to get
there and back.

—Garry Barker

Garry Barker is assistant director and marketing manager of the Berea College Student Crafts Program in Berea, Ky. His poetry and stories have been widely published in the region.

Front cover photo is by Alice Anthony, who teaches photography at East Tennessee State University and has participated in numerous solo and group exhibits. She is a frequent contributor to ***Now and Then.***

Volume 7, Number 1
Spring 1990

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•Bert Allen • Ed Cabbell •
• Pauline Cheek • Mary Chiltoskey •
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NOW AND THEN
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Appalachians living in cities here and everywhere

Fall 1990
Activism in Appalachia
The missionaries, philanthropists, corporations and governments who try to change—or preserve—the face of Appalachia

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Madison County, North Carolina

Photo essay by Robert Amberg

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Mudsock, and
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Now and Then Magazine

Now and Then has been published three times a year since 1984 by the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services (CASS) at East Tennessee State University. CASS is one of the State of Tennessee's Centers of Excellence supporting artistic, scholarly, and public service projects in the region. When you become a Friend of CASS ($9.00 per year, $12 for institutions and libraries) you will receive a subscription to *Now and Then*.

Submissions of poetry, fiction, articles, personal essays, graphics and photographs concerned with Appalachian life past and present are welcomed if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

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Tony Feathers

Now and Then Magazine

Still Waiting for Rather

Did you catch *48 Hours*, the CBS news program that focused on Floyd County, Ky., this past December? Dan Rather imparted the surprising information that "nothing has changed in Appalachia since the War on Poverty 25 years ago."

Apparently nothing has changed in the national media either. The coverage showed the same bleak landscape and evidence of every stereotype we've ever seen about the mountains: the poor but proud coal miner, the big families all living up the little hollers, the violence, health problems and ignorance. Did you know that cockfighting is the only alternative to coal mining in Eastern Kentucky? This I know for CBS has told me so.

I wrote to CBS. I asked for a copy of a report Dan Rather cited. He said a University of Kentucky study found that, "Many residents can't even afford the gas to get away." But CBS has not replied to my letter.

We have a different view of rural Appalachia for you in this issue, including a look at the history of Floyd County, Ky. I'm awfully sorry, but we completely missed all the cockfighting. We promise to devote a whole issue to it someday ("Fowl Play in Appalachia").

In the meantime we have some diverse—and strong—views of what is happening in the mountains today. One of our favorite essayists, Amy Tipton Gray, takes off after narrow-thinking about what is rural and Appalachian. Activist, teacher and writer Helen Matthews Lewis provides us with an interview with a leader of an effort to rebuild the rural community of Ivanhoe, Va. I had an interesting discussion with Southwest Virginia farm activist and theologian Richard Cartwright Austin. We are pleased to be printing the first short story that poet Jeff Daniel Marion has ever had published. And we are delighted to make the acquaintance of Robert Amberg, who sent us a photo essay on Madison County, N.C.

This "Rural Appalachia" issue will be joined by a companion "Urban Appalachia" issue in the summer. The two issues taken together should give a picture of the full, rich range of mountaineers' experience, of diverse economies, of special gifts, of complicated problems.

Well, I'll admit, we are missing that important "University of Kentucky Can't Even Afford the Gas to Get Away" study.

—Pat Arnow, Editor

Center for Appalachian Studies and Services

Exploring Rural Roots

Growing up within window-rattling distance of an elevated transit line that separated the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, N.Y., from Bensonhurst, some of the happiest hours of my early childhood were spent listening to my father's vivid descriptions of his family's summer place, an old farm in the Taconic range of the Northern Appalachians about 20 miles east of Albany.

Still active science educators in New York City, both of my parents share a love of nature and country living which is positively contagious. When I was six, we took our first family vacation on a working dairy farm in the Catskill Mountains where my sister and I were able to frolic in the hayloft, dig fishing worms in the barnyard, splash in clear rushing streams and wander down gravel roads and dirt trails. I had happy dreams about that farm for years afterward.

The next summer my parents took jobs as nature and crafts counselors at a co-educational camp in the northwest corner of Connecticut just south of Berkshire County, Mass., and no more than 10 miles east of the Appalachian Trail. After working 10 years at that camp, they were able to find an affordable house on a beautiful hillside in southern Berkshire County overlooking the Taconics to the west. Thirty years ago, my parents were among the very first city people to move into a rural neighborhood which was then still mainly occupied by working dairy farms, most of which have since been subdivided into vacation property. Though rural New Englanders are reputed to be cold and aloof, my mother and father quickly struck up a warm and deep friendship with the farm family down the road, after whom, in fact, the road was named. Despite obvious differences in their backgrounds, they nonetheless shared a great deal in common, particularly love of learning and love of the land.

About that same time I became interested in oldtime fiddle and banjo music, which drew mixed reviews from my family. My father's mother, who was raised on a farm in the Carpathian

mountains of Romania, enjoyed my fiddling because it reminded her of her father's hired hands, who played their fiddles and drank wine on warm summer nights. My mother's father, who was born in the marshy lowlands of the Dnieper basin in Byelorussia, did not care much for my fiddling or for the hills the rest of us loved so much. His primal memories were of a countryside so flat he claimed that you could stand on a tabletop and see for 50 miles in all directions. As for my fiddling, the kindest thing he could say was that it frightened away the mice and rats.

Aside from being a merciless teaser, Grandpa was also a great storyteller and a self-taught scholar who ranged widely and deeply through the humanities. He and my parents instilled a love of learning and of country living which have been happily combined in my career as a folklorist and cultural anthropologist in East Tennessee over the past 20 years and as director of this center since 1984.

Possibly the most valuable lesson my parents have taught me is to respect every person's unique character and to avoid casting individuals into stereotyped categories. In retrospect, their values have deeply influenced the underlying agenda and mission of CASS and *Now and Then*. Our fundamental purpose is to demonstrate the creative potential and intelligence of Southern Appalachian people, which is still so sadly underrated and so richly evident in this latest issue of *Now and Then*.

If you appreciate what you see here, please support our work by becoming a Friend of CASS. We've come a long way in a short time. Help us keep growing.

—Richard Blaustein, Director

Archives of Appalachia

Thoughtful Land Use

Appalachia often has been viewed as a rural area of marginal farms and widespread absentee ownership. Writers at the turn of the century presented the southern highlands as a land settled by Scots Irish who lived on subsistence farms supplemented by hunting or making whiskey. In this view of Appalachia, each successive generation was pushed farther and farther up the mountainside to farm land which was too steep to cultivate and was depleted quickly of its nutrients.

In later years, this view of rural Appalachia was reconsidered. Younger writers said that the agricultural system of small farms had been disrupted by the infusion of outside capital in lumbering, mining and industrial adventures and by the increase of absentee land owners. In this Appalachia of the third world, the land often was sacrificed for the wealth that could be extracted from the natural resources and the region's abundant supply of cheap labor. These simplified descriptions could not adequately explain rural life in the southern mountains; the broad valleys of East Tennessee are different from the coal-rich mountains in Eastern Kentucky, and the agricultural concerns of the 19th century were different from those in the last decades of the 20th century. And in both time periods some consideration was given to the thoughtful use of the land.

Among the collections held by the Archives of Appalachia, the Frederick S. Heiskell Papers provide some insight on the importance of planning and land use in the 19th century. In a report prepared for the southern political convention on the eve of the Civil War, Heiskell argued that East Tennessee had been ignored with regard to agricultural production but that the area was capable of producing crops and livestock for export to other states in the South. The report indicated that the amount of land in cultivation had doubled in the 10 years since the 1850 census. Heiskell stated that the six and a half million acres of land in East Tennessee would "sustain a rural population of a million besides artisans and other town and city inhabitants to the amount of a half million." Heiskell's report detailed specific crops which should be introduced to increase productivity.

In another collection held by the archives, First Tennessee-Virginia Development District Records, a report prepared in 1973 by a group of urban planning students at East Tennessee State University recounted the need for land use planning in rural areas. According to this report the extension of "urban fringe areas" into rural regions generally forced farmers to sell lands as a result of increased value and taxes. The students predicted a 25% decrease in land used for agricultural and environmental conservation purposes in the northeastern Tennessee district by 1990.

The archives holds several other collections with information relating to agriculture and rural life. The papers of United States Congressman B. Carroll Reece, who served East Tennessee from the 1920s through the 1950s, contain materials on government policies affecting agriculture in the region. The Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railroad

Myles Horton

"All the efforts to help the region, whether economic or cultural or religious, have demanded allegiance from those people as the price. It's true with the early religious missionaries and the early educational missionaries. We had to learn to speak like they did in the North, had to accept all their ideas. In other words, the price for their help is to take away your independence.

"Now, I could be counted as a missionary. If I try to impose ideas, my own ideas, on people, then I would be a kind of missionary that I don't like. I try to help people to do things themselves. Think for themselves. My whole educational philosophy is built around helping people make decisions that affect their lives instead of having those decisions made for them."

—From an interview by Associate Editor Jane Woodside and Missy Garant with Myles Horton, December 8, 1989. Horton died at Highlander Center in East Tennessee on January 19 at the age of 85. The founder of Highlander was a lifelong advocate for grass roots action in civil rights, environment and community power. Our fall issue, "Activism in Appalachia," will be dedicated to his memory.

Records spanning the early 1900s include information on the various agricultural enterprises in areas served by the railroad. In 1912, the railroad compiled a list of farmers and apple growers located along the line which stretched from South Carolina to Kentucky.

Representing a later period, the Model Valley Industrial Development Council Records document an effort in the 1970s to improve community services and to introduce a small industry into an economically depressed community in the rural area north of Knoxville, Tenn.

Three additional collections provide a more personal view of rural life. The Murray Family Papers and the Brabson Family Papers include correspondence, land surveys and deeds, and financial ledgers created by these families living in Washington County, Tenn., during the 1800s. The diary of Fannie Fain recounts the day-to-day life of a woman living near Blountville, Tenn., during the Civil War.

Audio visual materials which illustrate rural life in the mountains since the turn of the century also are available. Traditional agricultural practices and folklore are described in tape recorded interviews in the Burton-Manning Collection and Charles Gunter Collection. The Broadside Television Collection provides video recordings documenting rural life. These audio-visual collections cover such topics as quilting bees, bean stringings, apple peelings, hog killings, farming practices and planting by the signs.

Photograph collections depicting rural scenes include the Ken Murray Photographs, Clifford Maxwell Photographs and Mildred Kozsuch Collection.

For more information on the holdings of the Archives of Appalachia, please write the archives in care of the Sherrod Library, East Tennessee State University, Box 22,450A, or call 615-929-4338.

—Norma Thomas, Assistant Director for Archives and Special Collections
—Marie Tedesco, Public Service Archivist

Derelectic Materialism

This one is for the peg leg drunk
howling like a dog run over by a car
who wondered into the poetry workshop
like the living symbol of Appalachian need;
who showed us his empty bottle of mad dog wine
and held it aloft like a revelation
no sinners could forgive;
who we gave a deli sandwich with dijon mustard
and kosher
pickle
and escorted to the bench in front of McDonalds

yours is the wail that passeth human understanding
that pierceth the double pain window
of the beautiful art gallery
forever.

—Bob Henry Baber

Bob Henry Baber teaches at Southeast Community College in Harlan County, Ky., and is currently working on a play, ***The Dreams and Recollection of Kindred Spirits.***

Carroll Reece Museum

Tools of Pioneer Life

Most of East Tennessee was rural when the museum at East Tennessee State Normal School was started in the 1920s with a case or two of antique clothing, weapons and tools. Many faculty members and students contributed items to the museum including tools, clothing and items made for entertainment and other aspects of life in rural Appalachia. This collection is a mainstay in our permanent exhibitions as the Tennessee Frontier Gallery.

Among the objects housed in this gallery are:

- a Conestoga wagon which carried an entire family from the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia to Gray, Tenn.;
- a log cabin which stood near Jonesborough, Tenn.;
- hunting tools and weapons used to provide food and pelts;
- farming and gardening tools;
- spinning and weaving tools which aided in the production of clothing and coverlets—from growing flax and shearing sheep to the production of linens and woolens; and
- carpentry tools, for building homes and other structures as well as furnitures and household objects.

Through these examples one may learn of the skills that were necessary for everyday life, and the differences between the lives of the people then and our lives today.

When elementary school children visit, it is interesting to note their reaction when they learn, for example, that the woman of the household wove the blankets for the beds; or that it took three weeks for a family to travel a distance we now drive in six hours. The comparisons and contrasts with life in earlier times—and life in more remote areas today—are more apparent after viewing this collection and studying the uses of the variety of items in it.

We are grateful to the many donors who have made this collection as comprehensive as it is today, and look forward to future acquisitions which will further enhance the exhibit and educate the public.

—Margaret Carr, Registrar

The Green Hills of Home Far Away

Amy Tipton Gray

In the canon of Holy Works of Appalachia, the writings comprising the Old Testament—all composed before 1963, before there was an Appalachia: only the Ohio Valley or the Blue Ridge or the generic area known as Our Southern Highlands—tell the creation story something like this:

> *And lo, they went unto the wilderness and discovered there a beautiful land filled with a heathen people, gracious and hospitable but untrusting of strangers, who nevertheless welcomed them into their homes and gave of their songs, stories and simple handicrafts, for free. But they were an ignorant people, and did not know how to manage the bounty of the land of which they were the stewards. And so they had to be shown the error of their ways. Most rejoiced in the opportunities provided them to be led away from false idols into the sacrament of Honest Labor, but some were hard of head and would not listen. And the wrath of the Industrialists fell upon them, and the power of the Government fell upon them, and they were smitten with plagues such as the Broad Form Deed, until the pride of the idolatrous was broken and they gratefully accepted the scrip and company housing that fell upon them like manna from Heaven.*

After 1963, the apostles of the War on Poverty came up with a New Testament, which reinterpreted the Old in the light of the paths they had legislated to salvation. In it is a book for each agency, each project, each program. There is even a book covering the doctrine of Appalachia as a Third World Country. The dogma of this New Testament can be summed up as follows: the natives are in worse shape than ever, because they are still trying (despite the sorrowful fact that the small subsistence farm is all but extinct) to manage the land pretty much the way their revered ancestors did—in the aftermath of the devastation wreaked by exploitative colonialism, courtesy of the folks who set down the Old Testament. It is not surprising that the official version of Revelations has yet

From the Old Testament of Appalachia

From the New Testament of Appalachia

to be settled on, as all these apostles are visited by vastly different visions of the mountain apocalypse.

There is even an Apocrypha. The first book of the Apocrypha of Appalachia is called "Granny." In it is told the enheartening tale of the archetypal mountain grandma, rocking away on her porch dispensing wisdom and home remedies, singing ballads (none learned off the radio) as she pieces a quilt from one of the old patterns using cloth from her children's worn out clothes—preserving the Old in the teeth of the New with sagacity and good humor leavened by a touch of fundamentalism.

To balance "Granny" are the Books of Detroit, I and II, which tell of the coming of the automobile to an erstwhile pristine land and show how junked car bodies wreaked havoc on the scenery while creating wonderful photographs for the archives of news agencies to pull out every time somebody needs a picture of Life in Appalachia.

And there is the Book of the Noble Savage, documenting once and for all the means by which the Native Americans managed to live in harmony with the land without destroying the fragile environment.

The final book is called The Visit. It is the shortest book of all, and in it is found a tale I have been told all my life that goes something like this.

> *And it came about in the early days of the War on Poverty that the Government sent out learned men to preach the Good Word of Federal Subsidies and free shoes and better roads so that the land would become more easily accessible to tourists. And it so happened that some of these men were to be sent to Johnson City, Tennessee. When the town fathers (there were no town mothers) learned of this approaching visit, a great confusion came upon them, for Johnson City was not part of Appalachia, and they could not fathom why these men were being let loose upon them. So on the day of their arrival, the Government Men were met by a contingent driving limousines. Whereupon the visitors were taken to lunch at the Country Club where a feast was prepared before them. Then the learned men were put into one of the limousines and driven through the part of town where the wealthiest of citizens had built their homes. And the learned men realized they had made a mistake, and that in truth Johnson City was not part of Appalachia. And they rendered apologies to the town fathers and scratched the name of Johnson City forevermore from their list, and all parties were profoundly relieved.*

Since first becoming acquainted with the Canon, I have often thought that it lacks only one thing. Embossed on its cover should be a picture of Cerberus, to warn the unwary of the inferno they are about to enter—the inferno awaiting those who try to square what has been said about Appalachia with common sense. I would add one last touch. On the collar buckled around one head would be written the word "Romanticism." On the next collar, "Vilification." And on the third? A sketch of a city skyline, enclosed by a barred circle.

My family lived in town. Ergo, I was not mountain. For Mother, and for many of my friends, and for many of the people who write about the region, this remains to this day a fact beyond the faintest breath of refutation.

The third head of Cerberus has caused me a peculiar kind of trouble in my life. Take the last book of the Apocrypha. My mother told me that cautionary tale about the War on Poverty people whenever she thought I was getting carried away by what she considered the spurious romance of my nonexistent mountain roots. But Mother cannot be faulted for this. There was no reason for her to think otherwise, for from the very beginning, from the genesis of the concept of "Appalachia" (if I may be allowed to extend the metaphor a little further), mountain people and mountain culture have most emphatically been relegated to the realm of the rural, the third head. Appalachia and the urban were mutually exclusive. My family lived in town. Ergo, I was not mountain. For Mother, and for many of my friends, and for many of the people who write about the region, this remains to this day a fact beyond dispute, beyond the faintest breath of refutation.

Further complicating the matter is another fact. Until 20 years ago "rural" was a term of opprobrium. It's the ancient paradox: the City is the home of evil, the seat of vice, the corrupter of youth; in the Country all virtue resides. But in the country also reside the hick and the rube and the hillbilly, so no one wants to live there. Or be thought to be from there, once an escape has been effected. This is what Southern historian John Shelton Reed is talking about when he says that "Appalachia has always served as the South's South." If it is a bad thing to be a country person, and worse to be a country person from the South, the absolute nadir is to be a country person from the Southern mountains. That is the *ne plus ultra* of negative status.

Regard the Canon. Rural and Appalachia have always been perceived as being synonymous. To pair any word but rural with Appalachia is to create an oxymoron. This perception is still very much alive in the public mind. Those who doubt the truth of this statement should take another look at the recent *48 Hours* in which Dan Rather's troops came south to report to the nation about the typical mountain community. Of course, the reporters ignored the thousands of communities, however representative of the current norm, that didn't fit the popular picture. Instead, they selected one that exemplified every negative stereotype ever attached to the mountains—a place as atypical in the extremes of its poverty as a millionaire's mansion is atypical in the extremes of its wealth.

Perhaps this does not seem to be the time to raise the issue of pluralism. But that, I think, is at the heart of the problem of what is mountain, Appalachian, and what is not. From the beginning those defining the region—and I am speaking of writers both native and non-native—either could not recognize the fact that the

mountains are now and have always been pluralistic or chose to ignore this fact to promote a more convenient fiction. (In the native writers' case, the fiction promoted all too often was that mountain city mice are an entirely different species from the mountain country mice—hillbilly mice, as it were.) That the Holy Writings make such a profound error in judgment has become, for many, something of a truism, albeit one that bears repeating. The Writings presume a uniformity, a sharply restricted parameter of experience that simply has never existed. They reduce a complex region to the most simplistic of terms to better accomplish their own end.

What this boils down to, in the terms of Laurel and Hardy, is one fine mess. I can identify with those Samoans who went off to college only to be dismayed to discover that Miss Margaret's verdict about their culture had become a sort of Gospel of Oceania. I often feel like a Samoan myself. To borrow once more from John Shelton Reed, it doesn't make sense that what we who are natives have to say about the world we live in is discounted precisely because we are natives—at least, when what we say contradicts the Canon. This is especially true in my case, because according to the tenets of the Holy Writings (ah, the bite of the third head!) I am considered a sort of dubious native. My feet, though they are assuredly made of clay, are not mired in the mud of the Little Log Cabin Down the Lane.

But for argument's sake, let us suppose that all of them are right, and I am wrong. Whatever I am, I am not mountain because I grew up in town.

Okay. So that means everything Not-Town is Rural, right, and everything Rural is Native and Fine. So to find rural Appalachia all we have to do is leave the city limits.

That means the bait store/video parlors and condominiums and Christmas tree farms and satellite dishes and disco clogging and Holly Farms chicken ranches and hot tubs built onto the back of house trailers and amplified Autoharps and spaghetti squash and Trans Ams and hunting outfits made of camouflage and r.v. three-wheelers and air conditioning and synthesizers in the sanctuary and Shi Tzus and power boats and fake furs are all Rural as long as the people to whom they are attached 1) live in the country and 2) are originally from the mountains and 3) weren't raised in town.

And that means that the family who lived behind us on East Hillcrest and kept chickens and even had a pony for a while weren't rural. And all those folks who faithfully put in a garden, and planted by the signs more often than not, weren't rural because those gardens were planted in town. Not to mention the people who felt it was their bounden duty to can produce every summer—even if, like the father of my best friend, they worked for a retail grocery chain. And all those parents—like mine—who said, "You can't have a dog because we would have to keep it in the house and dogs are supposed to live outside." I guess it means that all of us town mice who made the trek out to Gray to the Appalachian District Fair every August, who faithfully slogged through the cattle and hog and poultry barns, who commented on the bass and trout in the Game and Fish Commission Tanks (and checked out the confiscated marijuana), who looked at every single vegetable—fresh and canned, prize winner or no, and registered for every free prize, even the cow feeders—I guess it means this behavior was simply bizarre. Not rural.

I can identify with those Samoans who went off to college only to be dismayed to discover that Miss Margaret's verdict about their culture had become a sort of Gospel of Oceania. I often feel like a Samoan myself.

I guess even this isn't rural. Do you remember the first time you every stepped in a cow pile? I do. Now please give me some credit. I am not talking about the first time I ever *saw* a cow pile. My brain may be encyclopedic, but some events are too trivial to be preserved even by my indiscriminate memory. I am talking about the first time I forgot to pay attention and slammed my foot (my right foot, in a white tennis shoe) right through the crust of what is politely called liquid manure. Which, for you urbanites, is not liquid under the top.

The setting was bucolic—a gorgeous afternoon in late June. A brief walk through the woods (laurel and dogwood and, alas, some briers), a duck under a barbed wire fence, a splash through the creek, a brief pull up a bank—and there we were. Rolling hills, mountains in the distance—the vista was beautiful. (The cows were grazing in another pasture that afternoon; I did manage to remember to check that out.) I had just turned 17. Blake and Wordsworth and Mary Noailles Murfree couldn't have been more delighted with the view that presented itself to our enchanted eyes. And so we tripped merrily along, enraptured by the beauty with which nature had graced us.

Until I stepped into the cow flop. And we had to figure out how to get my shoe clean so Mother wouldn't know I had been roaming around some place she didn't think I ought to be.

And where, you will ask, did this memorable event take place? On the family farm? On a hike? Some place way up in the hills that we teens had sneaked off to visit without permission?

It took place off King Richard Boulevard, a couple of hundred yards from houses that now go on the market at upwards of $150,000—in the heart of Johnson City, Tennessee. My home town.

Maybe it's time for somebody to come up with a Revised Standard Version of that benighted Canon.

Amy Tipton Gray, a 10th generation East Tennessean, is employed by Caldwell Community College in Hudson, N.C. A frequent contributor to ***Now and Then,*** *her chapbook of poetry,* ***The Hillbilly Vampire****, was recently published by Rowan Mountain Press.*

Photos courtesy of the Southern Appalachian Photographic Archives at Mars Hill College and the Archives of Appalachia at East Tennessee State University.

Portrait

Madison County, North Carolina

1973-1990

Robert Amberg

My involvement with Madison County dates from 1973. My favorite uncle had settled here two years earlier from Florida, and he suggested I come stay with him for awhile. I never left. Although I didn't know it at the time, my move to the county coincided with an influx of young people into the area. We were all part of a larger, nationwide movement "back to the land." These urban refugees were seeking respite from the cities, a more traditional way of life and a place to sink roots. Madison County's isolation, relatively untouched quality of life and residents who clung to its values and traditions offered the perfect haven for these newcomers.

Boy waiting for school bus in Sodom Laurel Community. Because of the roads and isolation of individual communities, children sometimes spend 90 minutes on the bus traveling one way to school.

Left: Christmas pageant in Marshall.

Right: Berzilla and Goose at the bypass in Marshall.

Contrary to the stereotypes of suspicious mountain people, most locals readily adopted the newcomers because of the interest we expressed in the traditional lifestyle. Many of the natives' own sons and daughters had chosen to leave the farm and the county for better jobs and a less strenuous way of life in the cities. Close to 50 percent of the present population of Madison County has moved here since the early-to-mid 1970s.

Berzilla Wallin (left) with her aunt, Zipporah Rice.

The area of Madison County, N.C., had been home for the Cherokee for many centuries when it was first settled by white people in the late 1700s. Fifteen years after the Cherokee removal by the federal government, in 1853, the area was established as a county with its seat in Marshall.

Madison County's economy and its character have always been shaped by the terrain. Steep mountains and isolated hollows have yielded little in the way of tillable ground, coal or other minerals. Residents have traditionally existed on a mixture of subsistence agriculture and small-scale logging.

Historically, with jobs being scarce, it was not uncommon for the man in the family to resettle "Up North" for a period of years. These economic migrants, like today's Third World migrant farm workers, would regularly send their paychecks back to the family and return home with a "nest egg" and the confidence that they could make it on the farm. To this day, the county produces little in the way of jobs, and the majority of residents commute daily to Asheville, N.C., and Greeneville and Newport, Tenn., for work.

Burley tobacco was introduced into the county in the 1920s and the small cash income it provided served to keep many families on the land. Madison County is the largest producer of burley tobacco in the state, with 25 percent of the state allotment for the crop. Tobacco is supplemented with tomatoes, beef cattle, corn and more recently, Christmas trees and ornamental plants. Most farm families, like farm families everywhere, also have at least one member of the family doing "public work."

Main Street, Marshall.

Portrait/Madison County, North Carolina

Photographically, I was initially drawn to the romantic side of the county—the light, the men plowing with horses, the old, wizened faces. This preoccupation with things past or passing gradually made room for an interest in the present. Now, when people ask what I photograph in Madison County, I say I photograph change.

My photographs concentrate on the day-to-day, commonplace events that shape people's lives. The images depend on feelings of trust, intimacy and involvement with the people I photograph. When they work, the photographs reveal hidden, universal qualities that are inherent in all of our lives if we take the time to look for them. It is these qualities that make us concurrently unique and just like everyone else.

Storefront in Marshall.

Dellie Norton feeding her animals, Sodom Laurel.

Farmers carrying tobacco plants to field.

Glove Plant in Marshall.

Junior Norton plowing.

Fourth of July Party at Anderson Branch.

In no way are these photographs meant to be an objective representation of the county. I like to think of them as subjective facts that say as much about me as they do about the people I photograph. I recently began to understand the truism that what a photographer chooses to photograph is the most important decision he makes. With that decision, the photographer attaches value, proclaims that *this* is more important than *that*. For me, value is attached to those feelings of trust, intimacy and involvement and a belief that the key to our preservation lies in the our rural communities.

Robert Amberg photographs, writes and gardens from his home on Anderson Branch in Madison County. His work has been published and shown nationally. He often photographs farm families and rural communities for farm advocacy organizations.

Maxine Waller: The Making of a Community Organizer

by Helen Matthews Lewis

Maxine Waller, president of the Ivanhoe, Va., Civic League.

Ivanhoe is a small rural mountain community on the New River at the far end of the two counties of Wythe and Carroll in Southwest Virginia. As the poorest community in the area, its problems are ignored by both counties.

From the mid-1800s Ivanhoe was a booming iron ore center with lead, zinc and manganese mining. National Carbide and New Jersey Zinc, two of the largest industries in Southwest Virginia, provided the economic base of the area. At its height, Ivanhoe counted 4,500 residents and boasted a school, a railroad, a hotel, stores, a theater, a doctor and a restaurant. But in 1966 National Carbide closed, taking 450 jobs with it, and in 1981 New Jersey Zinc followed suit, with a loss of 350 jobs.

Now Ivanhoe has about 1,300 residents, and the school, stores, theater and railroad are all gone. Employment opportunities in Ivanhoe are very limited. Those who found other jobs after the factories and mines closed commute an average of 63 miles to work, and most had to accept lower pay and fewer benefits.

Maxine Waller, an Ivanhoe resident since 1971, has emerged as a leader in the struggle to improve economic conditions in her community. In this interview she tells the story of how she came to understand that she and the other residents of Ivanhoe must take responsibility for the community's livelihood.

I was born in over near Max Meadows in a little community called Locust Hill. It was an iron ore camp. It's a nonexistent community now. It's all been destroyed. All the land has been sold, and all the houses were torn down.

Daddy worked for a garment mill, Burlington Mills for 40-some years. Mother did anything that needed to be done. All of her life she worked in the factories. She worked at the shirt factory in Wytheville. She was a wonderful seamstress, but they wanted young bodies. She had to go to work for the laundry in Wytheville, and in the early 70s, she retired and wasn't bringing home but 30 dollars a week.

Daddy worked evening shift all my life. Mama always worked day shift. When I was little, I would sit home with my daddy 'til he got ready to go to work, and then I would go to a neighbor's house and stay there 'til my mama come. She paid them to keep me. It seemed like it was days that I didn't get to go home.

I went to Max Meadows Elementary School. Then I went to Fort Chiswell High School, and I quit back in 60-something. I left home and worked and met a lot of people, looked at life a little differently and grew and learned a lot. I decided never to come back to the Appalachian mountains as long as I lived, 'cause the only thing they had was a lot of bitter memories.

I came back to visit Mother—she was sick—and I met my husband, M.H. I met him in Wytheville at a party. I was kind of afraid of him 'cause he said he was from Ivanhoe. I heard that Ivanhoe was worse than Locust Hill, and I didn't think you could get much worse than Locust Hill. He asked me if I would go out with him. He told me he was going to take me to the theater. We got over in Ivanhoe and we parked on the side of the road. It was down in town. We were just sitting there listening to Christmas music on the radio. Every little bit, somebody would pull up beside the car, and he would roll down the window and have a conversation.

I finally asked, "Didn't you tell me you were taking me to the theater?" "I already have," he replied. "Then where in the hell is it?" "Right there," he said pointing out the window. All I could see was a bunch of weeds and beer cans. "It burned down 15 or 20 years ago," he said. "Then what are we doing here?" And he said, "Well, I sit down here at the theater and talk to people every night." So I found out what a date with him was right fast: sitting in Ivanhoe and talking to people.

He looked over at me one time and said, "I hope you realize that I'm always going to live in Ivanhoe." He took me over to the Carbide plant, and I got Carbide dust on my shoes.

We started going out, and within two weeks' time I was in love. That's how I got to Ivanhoe. I

ain't never regretted. I ain't never looked back. Through loving him I have learned to see all the things he sees, and I've learned to love it, too.

I moved to Ivanhoe in 1971. Carbide left in '66, but the mines was there, and M.H. worked in the mines. The population wasn't any bigger than it is now, but there were more stores here.

M.H. came home one day and said the mines were closing. That was about the most horrible year in our lives, about the worst thing we've ever been through. He didn't have a job, and I had to have some medical help, and we didn't have no insurance.

Everybody said it was a recession. I saw it as a time that they broke one of the strongest unions in the world. We could have moved to Tennessee. M.H. said, "I'll dig ditches before I leave. This is my home." Then he got a job digging ditches for $3.35 an hour. That was the worst time he had ever been through.

"Now M.H. goes to work at (the) Radford (Arsenal). He still doesn't like the job. He drives 45 miles one way to work and 45 miles back, and then he is always tired from this long drive. It takes 12 hours to pull eight.

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About May of 1986 he had bought an old blue '64 Ford. That was the ugliest old blue car. He thinks it's beautiful. It sat there for about two years, and men were always stopping asking if we were going to sell it. That made me mad. We had built him a garage behind the house, and I had tried to fix a place to put that old car, but there was this big old rock sticking up there. I hired a bulldozer to move that rock, and he couldn't move it. I got a man with a backhoe. It almost tore his backhoe up.

So, there's this old rock stuck in my way, and this old blue car in front of my house. That Saturday evening I was out there standing beside that old rock, and this little boy came along, and he asked me what I was doing. I said, "I wanted to put the car in here, but that rock's in my way. You can't move this rock. Rocks is forever." He said, "Max, you just like everybody else in Ivanhoe—you don't think you can do nothing, and I hate this damn place!"

I thought, "Lord, what is this kid saying? He is only 14, and he hates this damn place?" All M.H. had ever talked about was how much he loved it, and all the people I have talked to say how much they love it, but here is this little kid that lives here that says he hates it.

I said, "What can I do about it?" He said, "Well, why don't you break it?" I said, "You can't break a rock." He said, "We can take a hammer and break that rock."

So I just stepped in the garage and got him a hammer, and I got me a hammer, and we started beating on that rock. Along came another little boy, and he was just 14 too. He said, "You've gone crazy. You're just like everyone else in Ivanhoe. And I hate this place."

I handed him a hammer, and I got out another hammer. Michael, our son, came out of the house and asked what we were doing. "Beating this old rock," I said. When he said, "I hate Ivanhoe," I knew the Lord was telling me something. So I gave him a hammer too.

So we went to beating on this rock, me and the sons of former hardrock miners beating out our anger and frustration on a hard rock. We beat on that rock all summer long: 21 boys and one little girl, my daughter. It wasn't breaking. It was just chipping away. The kids ate with us every meal, and some days we would go through three pounds of bologna and three gallons of milk. Come the end of summer, nobody had broken the rock; but we had a driveway full of gravel.

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When it was time for the kids to go back to school, I picked up the newspaper, the Roanoke Times, and right beside of the obituary column it said, "Property in Ivanhoe to be sold; money to be taken into Wytheville and Hillsville to build factories to employ people, to put it in their industrial parks."

I knew that Wytheville alone had spent $400,000 on their industrial park. They were going to sell this little piece of land here in Ivanhoe that I maybe could have used for a playground for the kids, or we need for jobs. I decided they might sell this piece of property, but I was going to go over there and tell the Board of Supervisors what I thought of them, that I was paying them to work for me, and that they was selling something that we needed.

I heard that there was a meeting going to be down at Odd Fellows Hall about 15 minutes before it happened. I grabbed M.H., and I said, "Come on, we got to go down there!" There were 57 people there. Everybody signed a petition and said they would come to the Board of Supervisors' meeting the next morning.

I got to the meeting, and George L. was sitting there, and he was the only person. He looked at me and said, "Where the hell is everybody?" He said, "You make a speech, and I'll go on home, and I'll meet you in Ivanhoe." I said, "I'll tell you one thing—if I make a speech, you're going to set here and listen to me."

I hadn't never made a speech in my life. I didn't know what to do. They said, "Is there anybody got anything to say?" I thought, "I might go down, and I might go to jail, and they might do a lot of things to us in Ivanhoe, but at least I'm going to say something before they do it." So I got up, and I told them everything I wanted to say. I told them I felt really bad having to tell my government that they was doing a bad job—but they were doing a bad job. Then I invited them to Ivanhoe and told them we were having another town meeting and I wanted them to come. So I went back to Ivanhoe and called a town meeting.

I called the sheriff and told him we were going to have a protest march. There was four or five mamas that got behind the kids that helped pull this together. We got all this poster paper, and we made signs. One little boy's sign said, "Give us a factory or give us back our taxes." "IVANHOE FOREVER" was another. I told the kids when they stopped out in the street that evening, "I make you a promise. They ain't nobody else going to do nothing else to you as long as I live." Both my children were in that march. There was about 30 kids, and they marched down that street, and they were chanting, "Don't sell us out." The newspaper was there. We marched into the Odd Fellows building, and the kids went and sat down. I asked a friend of mine that worked at the bank if she would take some notes, 'cause the politicians were coming. I told her to write down if they promised us something. We had 150 people at that meeting.

This friend of mine asked me if I would be president (of the newly-forming Ivanhoe Civic League). I said,

"No. It would take a man to be president, or somebody with an education." He said, "Max, I think you should be president." There sat all those kids, and I knew every one of them, and they was just looking at me. I said, "If people will let me, I will do the best that I can do." I did it because I realized right then that I was the only person in that room that knew every one of the children by name and knew most of their problems. They asked for nominations for president, and there wasn't nobody nominated but me. I was unanimously elected. Since that time, I have done to the best of my ability whatever I felt was right for us as a community.

It's been the greatest thing that ever was. We've had change. People that have stayed home most of their lives and never participated in anything are out doing community things now. We're going to renovate the houses. Any time that a nickel is spent in Ivanhoe that wasn't never spent here before, it is an improvement. I can see a great change in Ivanhoe. I see the kids participating in and doing things. To me Ivanhoe is a far better place than it was for the simple reason there has been a lot of people's lives changed because of the Ivanhoe Civic League. It has created friendships that will be forever. It has created happiness. We have brought about social change.

It ain't enough. We've got to keep on moving.

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In the first month of its existence the Ivanhoe Civic League stopped the sale of the Ivanhoe Industrial Park. The Industrial Development Authorities agreed to delay the sale for two years to give the community a chance to recruit industry to the park. Ivanhoe citizens began a year-long campaign to revitalize the dying town. Their creative efforts included an emotional publicity fund-raising event, "Hands Across Ivanhoe," in which 3,000 people paid $3.00 to stand in the cold rain to clasp hands in support of Ivanhoe.

The following summer, community volunteers cleared land on a portion of the industrial park near the river and named it Jubilee Park. They held a week-long Fourth of July celebration which was part fund raiser, part community mobilization effort, and part celebration of their renewed spirit and determination.

Through the county and state the community has succeeded in gaining funds for a shell building on the industrial part for a factory. For the time being, the Industrial Development Authorities are not trying to sell the land.

Two business ventures, a machine shop and a sewing factory, have attempted operations, but were defeated by undercapitalization.

As it has become more and more obvious that recruiting an industry for this small, rural community is a difficult, if not impossible goal, the Civic League suggested that Jubilee Park become a community-owned enterprise. A tourist industry with bike rental, camping, rafting and a convenience store would provide jobs and recreation for the community. The net income would support further economic development.

But the two counties' Industrial Development Authorities would not define Jubilee Park as an industry, and they would not allow them to lease or buy the land, even though it was largely on the flood plain and had been considered worthless and expendable several months earlier.

Ironically, the frustrating encounters with the local governments and Industrial Development Authorities renewed the Civic League's determination and lent support to their conviction that if anything was going to happen in Ivanhoe, the people would make it happen.

In the fall of 1987 the citizens of Ivanhoe organized classes for the community to explore economic possibilities. Several people, including myself, were invited to develop the economics classes (which I renamed "economic discussions").

As the discussions proceeded, members of the community began to reconsider their goals. They conducted a community survey, and in this process, they changed their focus from chasing smokestacks to looking to smaller local development based on their own needs and resources.

They first organized a senior citizens' program and a youth recreation program. Then, after remodeling an old store building in the center of town, they created a range of programs, from youth tutoring to college classes.

The Civic League developed jobs for six to 10 people with VISTA and other government-sponsored programs, making the League the town's largest employer.

The League also purchased a large house in the town center next door to the Education Center. It houses their offices, classrooms and living spaces for the college student volunteers who help refurbish homes.

The community has also developed the Ivanhoe History Project, a major effort for two and a half years. I remained in the community to help with the project. From the 58 oral histories and 800 photographs, they have produced two volumes of Ivanhoe history. In addition they developed a play, ***It Came From Within****, performed at Jubilee 1989. The Virginia Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy and the Virginia Arts Council helped fund the project.*

Telling their stories, remembering and recording the stories and reflecting on that history made it possible for members of the community not only to preserve their history but to learn from it and plan together their future development.

Maxine Waller, the energetic leader of the group, recently earned her GED diploma through the community program. She directed the theater project.

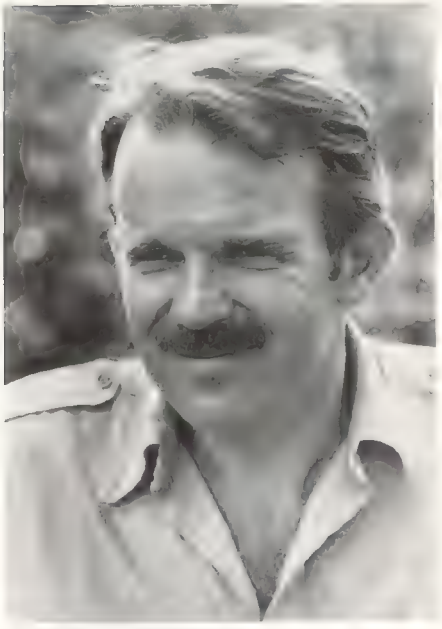
Helen Matthews Lewis is a community educator, writer, lecturer and filmmaker who works with Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market, Tenn.; Appalshop, the media production center in Whitesburg, Ky.; Berea College in Kentucky; and Mountain Empire Community College in Dungannon, Va. She lives on a farm near Dungannon.

This interview appears in
IVANHOE, VIRGINIA: Remembering Our Past—Building Our Future,
a two-volume community and oral history of Ivanhoe, from the Ivanhoe Civic League. For more information contact The Ivanhoe Civic League, P.O. Box 201, Ivanhoe, Va. 24350.

Richard Cartwright Austin

It Isn't Just Going Back

by Pat Arnow



Richard Cartwright Austin. Photo by Mark Lennihan.

The preacher-theologian-farmer-agricultural idealist proposes some radical ideas for rural Appalachia.

Richard Cartwright Austin insists that his plans for American land reform, widespread organic farming and Constitutional protection for the environment, aren't Utopian fantasies. "They're necessary," he says from his organic farm in Southwest Virginia.

But he doesn't expect much help from the U.S. government. "I'm skeptical of federal government leadership," he says. "In general, the Department of Agriculture and the land grant colleges and the extension service are heavily invested in high technology, large-scale, high-input agriculture. They're more a part of the problem than part of the solution. The farm economy we're in is a dead end."

The potential for change is real, he believes—and he speaks from experience. For most of his 30-year career as a Presbyterian minister, Dick Austin has lived and worked in the coalfields of Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Southwest Virginia. He has seen what citizen action can do in the mountains. In his new book on the environment, *Reclaiming America,* forthcoming from Creekside Press in Abingdon, Va., he writes about his experiences: "Most of my years as a pastor were spent in the coalfields of Appalachia, where I eventually became so alarmed by the ravages of strip mining that...I helped organize a nationwide effort to obtain Federal regulation of this destructive practice." That effort was successful. In 1977 he and his colleagues stood in the Rose Garden watching President Carter sign the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act.

Austin also led a successful resistance to a proposed pumped-storage hydroelectric facility at Devil's Fork and Brumley Gap, Va.

It was seeing the destruction of the land that led him to farming. "I got interested in farming by way of strip mining, which is odd. My church people and the communities where they lived were being destroyed by the advance of strip mining. It was a huge environmental and social—and for many people, personal—disaster. I got involved with them in efforts to resist the mining and control it. I worked very intensively in that for several years. Through that experience I felt kind of a fresh calling to work on the relation of Christian faith to environmental integrity. I felt I knew very little about that.

"So in order to get some some peace of mind, and in order to get some fresh positive experience, I moved to Southwestern Virginia and started farming. I wanted contact with a living system rather than a dying system. I wanted to get some experience growing things and trying to understand how a living—or a more healthy—environment might work. This has been my base from where I've worked on my thinking and worked on my writing. I've done a little farming, and right now I'm doing quite a bit of farming."

He produces strawberries, raspberries, peppers, tomatoes and maple syrup on his 160-acre Chestnut Ridge Farm. "That sounds big, but it's mostly steep woodland and pasture. Only five acres are tillable," he explains.

He is also developing ideas for change—for the mountains and for the entire rural landscape of America. "If we seriously addressed the questions of rebuilding the economy and society that related creatively to the landscape--its agricultural potential, its forestry potential, its recreational potential, we could build a more diverse and ultimately a more prosperous society that could sustain more people. In the past here in Scott county where I live, there used to be a lot more people living there than do now. They certainly weren't rich, but there was a rich culture here, there was a full culture here."

He does not see the future of the mountains based in coal. "The land in the coalfields, 75 percent is held by large or absentee corporations. Mining is going to decline rapidly because of what it is doing to the environment. It will be quite dramatic."

He makes a radical proposal: "One of the most critical things we need in the Southern mountains is land reform." He believes that corporations should be made to sell off their holdings to individuals who will then be able to reclaim the land and rebuild communities. "We talk a lot about land reform in the Third World, but we need it too, and we need it soon.

"If this land continues to be held by the companies, it would really smother all possibilities for economic life—and for human life in the region. I think we desperately need now—and the need will intensify—real land reform where the government intervenes and redistributes land to people in the region. I think there's need across the country, but it's very acute here."

He sees that with the decline of coal employment in the mountains, "People do not have access to alternative means of making a living because they do not have access to the land. It's a bad idea for corporations to own land at all, because they operate from the profit motive. I want to see land removed from the hands of corporations and put in the hands of individual owners. People can be socialized to love and protect land.

"Tasks of conserving and rebuilding the landscape can provide a lot of employment—and public benefit. We are going to have to invest in the rehabilitation of the natural environment to protect the watershed, timber supplies, public health, the diverse ecosystem, game species. Rebuilding a diverse economy will provide a lot of opportunity."

Appalachia is ideally suited for showing the way. He points out three strengths. First, he says, "Agriculture everywhere in the United States has been profoundly affected by the industrial and technological revolution. Mountain agriculture, because the terrain is less well-suited to large-scale crop production, has preserved more traditional features than agriculture in other places. For instance, when I started farming with horses 12 years ago, I not only found people in Scott County, Va., here who breed workhorses, but I also found a neighbor who could train my horses and could train me in the use of the horses. I found used equipment available. All this is tending to die out, but it is not gone, and it means that this cultural resource is still available. That's more true here than in areas which went altogether to machinery and tractor farming 40 and 50 years ago."

Secondly, he points out that there is still plenty of small-scale farming in Appalachia, unlike other parts of the country. This strength, ironically, is due to tobacco. "Tobacco, which supports much agriculture in this region, is still oriented to small farms. It's the only federal subsidy program that is. At a deeper level it may be an unhealthy system, but it has helped to protect small farms. In areas where other crops are grown the subsidies are not tied to the acreage. The subsidy system has tended to encourage the consolidation system."

Because there has been less large-scale farming in the mountains than elsewhere, the region has gained what Austin sees as its third strength—a good base for organic farming. This kind of agriculture, which does not rely on manufactured fertilizers, pesticides or defoliants, Austin believes, is the direction for the future.

One of the most critical things we need in the Southern mountains is land reform...

"The styles of farming that will be required for human health and for environmental integrity will have to use less chemical input, less oil-based input in fertilizers. We're going to have to rely more heavily on developing healthy soils, move more toward organic-style farming. This will be easier in these marginal areas where we can combine some of the traditional cultures, some of the memories of how farming used to be done and some of the living techniques of how it was done—with new insight. It isn't just going back. It's remodeling agriculture. And when you reform or remodel something, you borrow from the old and you also add on the new.

"We're in a stronger position to do that in the mountains than in the Great Plains. Biologically, mountain fields are well-suited to organic farming. The base is more diverse, and from an environmental point of view, more healthy. There are small fields with edges of diverse biological life, of healthy ecosystems around the tilled field. These will make biological farming with fewer pesticides much more feasible in the mountains than it is in the areas where the fencerows have been removed, where the fields are huge, and they've been growing one or two crops over a long period of time.

"In vast areas of the Midwest, you do not have a natural biotic community that helps you compete with predators and diseases. There is no biological life left either in the soil or in the environment.

"Healthy organic farming requires relatively small fields because you do depend on your natural biological community to help keep insects and other organisms in balance. You depend on birds and spiders to come into your fields and eat things you don't want. So the fields (need to be) relatively small."

For all their strengths the mountains are not without their share of problems for farmers. "The market system changed to require standardized produce. Nearby markets for farm produce, which the small farmers thrived on in the 20s and 30s have largely disappeared. Supermarket chains require very standardized commodities. If you can't produce a standard tomato or a standard pepper in large quantities for supermarkets, you are out of luck. And most small farmers can't do that. So the changes undercut the economic base of small farmers in the mountains. Small farms were not able to invest in the changes required."

Austin doesn't think destructive forces have impaired most of Appalachia as much as other parts of the country. But there are clearly serious problems. "We've had an enormous amount of environmental destruction. Some of it is due to farming, more of it is due to timber practices and even more of it to coal mining, particularly with the development of strip mining. It has been the leading cause of environmental degradation in the Southern mountains."

Citizens in the mountains offer hope for preserving and reclaiming the environment, he believes. He told *Sojourners* magazine recently, "I learned early on from my years as a pastor in Appalachia, and from the days when I started fighting strip mining in Southwest Virginia, that the only defense those mountains have from exploitation by energy conglomerates' bulldozers is the poor, isolated people who live in those

hollers, who care so deeply that they would fight for that land. Take those people away and the mountains are totally defenseless."

On his own farm he is attempting to put his ideas in action, especially by working with horses instead of tractors and by employing organic farming techniques. He admits that it is difficult. Farm experts from schools, extension services and the government are not experts in the kind of farming Austin is doing. He does not have a widespread network to call on. Chestnut Ridge Farm is not a profit-making venture, he admits. But a small area supermarket chain (Food Country) has agreed to carry his organic produce this summer in a special new section of their stores. Austin does hope one day his farm will be self-supporting.

However, he's not that concerned about profits. He believes that measuring success strictly on the basis of cash return is a mistake. "I think in order to model the redevelopment of small farming realistically we have to break free from the wage model. As long as you treat a farm as a strictly economic commodity where 90 percent of your time and effort is directed to raising crops for sale, then using the cash income to meet your human needs, I don't think it'll work on a small scale.

"I think we have to adopt a different paradigm. And that paradigm is trying to meet as many of our needs as possible directly through farming. Obviously we can grow most of what we need to eat. We can provide most of our own recreation. We can do many things for ourselves—not the individual farmer in isolation but a community of people with a fresh perspective. We also need a cash income, because we can't do everything for ourselves. There is a place for that, but I think that the success of small farming depends on increasing the amount that we do for ourselves and decreasing our dependence on cash income. The perfect model for this in its extreme form is the Amish, who meet most of their needs from the farm and are quite prosperous.

Values need to be changed if this plan is to work. "As long as we orient everything to a cash economy, we are ordering everything to exploitation. Somebody's going to have to get exploited to produce that income. Either some person or some land. We keep moving the exploitation to the fringes of the system. We move it to the Third World.

Austin does recognize that "there will always be a need for a cash economy. Most farm families include a member that works off the farm now. Oftentimes it is the wife who works at a job for wages while the husband farms."

That is true on his own farm. He and his wife, Gestalt therapist Ann Leibig, like most other small farmers, could not survive on the farm without outside income, he says.

This pattern is not part of the rural landscape that Austin wants to change. "Small farms will never support people without an outside income. A typical family may need a diversity of resources. I'm not trying to change that pattern. I think it makes for a better life if you can do several different things."

...where the government intervenes and redistributes land to people in the region.

There must be a tradeoff—satisfaction for money. "We need a little more subtle and creative understanding of where money comes from."

But a more diverse economy in rural areas will mean more jobs closer to home. Rural areas could—and should—support a much larger population, Austin believes. "Southern Appalachian rural landscape should be much more heavily populated and could support a lot more people. One of the weaknesses of small farm economy, an awful lot of people live on farms with very little community. We need a diverse complex community that is socially healthier."

Austin's thinking about rural life has developed from a spiritual base, "a calling to develop links between Christian faith and the needs of the natural environment."

He told *Sojourners* magazine, "I see the farm as part of my identity and ministry...My major crop is insight, and I'm willing to pay something for that. I can't claim that I have made a financial success out of the farm. I have not. But that's in part because I've got several goals here, and making some financial return is only one. It's sort of a laboratory for me. It's a sensual, moral, experiential laboratory in which I learn about the earth."

He considers his crops as only part of the bounty. "I'm a preacher-theologian. It nourishes me both physically and spiritually. I don't like to think of agriculture too narrowly. My books are a good crop too."

On the practical side, with his experiments in organic farming, "responsible timbering" and maple sugaring he hopes he will create viable alternatives for farmers. He has designed the farm to employ full-time helpers, not just seasonal workers. But he doesn't call his farm a model. "I don't want to be a model. I'll try a few things out. I do think we have to broaden our sense of what agriculture is. The most important part of agriculture is sustenance and satisfaction. That is what you get out of the land which your family gets and your community gets. What the whole community of life gets.

"If you're not eating your own food, you're wasting your time. And, we have to protect the land for future generations. The idea of using it up and throwing it away, which has been very prevalent in the mountains, has to be changed."

In *Reclaiming America*, Austin proposes a strong method of changing the way land is used—a Constitutional Amendment. He would like to "confer rights upon...ecosystems, species and natural features."

He doesn't expect fast action on this proposal any more than there was fast action on the Equal Rights Amendment. But like the ERA, he believes the proposal for an amendment to the Constitution to ensure civil rights to nature will stimulate discussion across the country.

He writes, "On Chestnut Ridge Farm I wish the rights of the earth were recognized under law, for the responsibility I bear is oppressive...Our cultural definition of property assigns me more power than is good for me or for the earth...The future of Chestnut Ridge is clouded because the landscape is not truly recognized by the culture which surrounds it...America is not yet the 'land of the free' when the earth itself remains enslaved."

Pat Arnow has had a long-term interest in agricultural issues.

Homeplace Geography

Don Davis

Every environment encourages a special mythology
—Frederick Turner
Beyond Geography

On hot summer days, through ocher sedge and aromatic rabbit tobacco, my brother and I often walked to Flatrock to fish or swim. Flatrock, a half-mile to the west of home, was the community name for a 30 yard stretch of slow-moving water on West Chickamauga Creek, a Northwest Georgia tributary of the Tennessee River. At Flatrock layers of smooth limestone formed the creek's bank and bottom, making it the preferred site for swimming, fishing or wading.

At the south end of Flatrock was the principal fishing hole, in the deep shade of two ancient silver maples. There, in the bend of the creek, we could catch a variety of fish, the kind and number depending on the time of day, season, bait and method of angling.

On midsummer mornings we used a cane-pole and larvae from a pillaged paper-wasp nest as bait to catch a black crappie or red-eye (rock) bass. We caught brown bullheads or "mudcats" on warm spring days, usually with the aid of "store-bought" spinning reels and redworms gathered from my grandmother's compost pile. Jack (sauger) we caught in colder months. They took anything resembling small minnows, including, on one occasion, a shiny, baitless treble-hook.

In May of 1960 my daddy's trotline—a series of hooks tied to a long cord stretched diagonally across Flatrock's waters—netted a 28 pound shovelhead. This monstrous catfish was the cause of much excitement in the Davis family. Everyone had their picture made with the gigantic fish, including the dogs, us kids, the neighbors and their kids.

Traditionally, those who fished with trotlines baited them with small frogs and/or "spring lizards" (salamanders) and set them just before dark. People on some parts of the Tennessee and Mississippi River valleys still practice this method of fishing today, and variations of it ("jug" or "hang" fishing).

Earlier in the century, the community used fish baskets as the primary means of catching fish on West Chickamauga Creek. Using this method, the fishermen increased both the variety and number of fish they could catch. In Southern Appalachia, fishermen generally baited their baskets at dusk and checked them next morning before or at sunrise.

According to my maternal grandmother, the fish basket on West Chickamauga Creek was shared, as usufruct, by all families in the community, viz., one family might use it on Tuesday, another on Wednesday. In the late 1920s, she says, her family had the basket on Saturdays and Sundays. Before sunset, her mother would bait the basket by crumbling cornbread made especially for the occasion into the square center of the long wooden trap. Early the next morning my grandfather brought home the basket and its contents—usually bream, small catfish, drum and bass. We cleaned, cooked and ate the fish with biscuits and hominy grits before Sunday's church service.

In late spring, schools of large carp came to Flatrock to lay their roe in the sandy residue covering the limestone creek bottom. I remember a warm, sunny day in June when my brother and I thought it necessary to wrestle—with bare hands—several of the carp from the creek's blue-green water. With the help of a few friends, we were successful, fortunately harming neither the fish nor ourselves. After close inspection of our formidable opponents, we returned them to the creek to a more ecological fate.

Carp, introduced to North America from Europe in 1870, were considered trash fish by most of the community. Because carp are course browsers of submerged plants, they muddy the water, making the area uninhabitable for most native species. Blacks from the nearby community known as Happy Top prized carp as a food source, however, and had a number of creative ways for catching and preparing them.

The practice of catching fish with hands, or grappling, was a common skill possessed by the earliest inhabitants of the Chickamauga Creek watershed. The native Creek and Cherokee Indians practiced this now virtually lost art. It is probable that the native Americans taught grappling to the first white settlers who came to the area in the early 1800s.

Even as late as the 1920s, when the creeks in the region supported larger populations of fish, grappling was a common, if not essential, survival practice. A skilled grappler worked the creek's slick banks, deliberately placing his hands among tree roots in underwater "holes." When the grappler felt a fish, usually a catfish, he immediately grasped the creature around the gills and pectoral

I remember a warm, sunny day in June when my brother and I thought it necessary to wrestle—with bare hands—several of the carp from the creek's blue-green water.

Don Davis, a native of northwest Georgia, now lives in Powell, Tenn., and is the author of ***Ecophilosophy: A Field Guide to the Literature.*** *He has written for* ***Environmental Ethics*** *and* ***Utne Reader.*** *This essay is excerpted from a prizewinner in the student essay competition at the Appalachian Studies Conference, 1990.*

fins with one hand to render it immobile. Then, using both hands, he pulled the fish forcefully from the hole and tossed it high on the creek bank. The grappler performed this maneuver swiftly in a sweeping motion, and if he was successful, accompanied the feat with loud whoops of delight.

A favorite boyhood haunt, Flatrock was the reference point which located all events on West Chickamauga Creek. If I saw a flock of wood ducks during a day's outing, I described the location of the sighting as either south or north, up or downstream from Flatrock. If a more exact description were needed, I would broach other natural landmarks: "South of Flatrock, just beyond that old beech tree, across from the canebreak on Mr. Rodger's place," is how, some 15 years ago, I described the location of a hummingbirds' nest to my brother. Simply put, events were located according to a recognized physical proximity to other landmarks. Activity on the creek bottom was never defined in terms of exact or measurable distances.

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The first detailed maps of the area, drawn in the early 1860s, reveal a landscape sparsely dotted with homesteads, mills, woods and bottomland—all connected by a complex web of roads, fords, footpaths and springs. These early maps show a community bound to its topography. Roads running "north-south" follow the curvature of the valley's creek bottom; roads crossing "east-west" take travelers through gaps in the ridges or shallow fords on Chickamauga Creek. Centers of activity are farms, mills and stores, most of which are located directly on, or in proximity to, fertile bottom land.

Modern cartography tells us little about a landscape or its people. Remotely photographed, mapped and surveyed, modern landscapes are transformed into hectares and grids in dimensionless space. The contemporary map is not the territory. This dictum should be remembered when deciphering the plans and projections of municipal planners, who interpret and project a world based on representations found outside the realm of our own lived experience. The *Rand McNally Commercial Atlas*, for example, tells me that Catoosa County is now a "Metro Area," a commercial satellite of the city of Chattanooga, Tenn. In the projections of Rand McNally, my land has value only as a future site for industry or business.

Landscapes are deceptive—even when experienced firsthand. No one traveling along the roads surrounding my birthplace could be expected to know the full history of the land or its people. Modern development projects, strip mine sites, industrial parks, expressways and subdivisions transform the countryside overnight, erasing all known signatures of past geography. In this sense landscapes are, writes John Berger in *A Fortunate Man*, "less a setting for the life of its inhabitants than a curtain behind which their struggles, achievements and accidents take place. For those who, with the inhabitants, are behind the curtains, landmarks are no longer geographic but also biographical and personal."

With the completion of each project, a part of our family's past is erased. Our very being is thrown into doubt.

The landmarks of my own homeplace are personal and evocative: there is deep history written in the bends and oxbows of West Chickamauga Creek. An ancient beech tree near Flatrock has carved into its smooth bark the names of blood relatives, many long since dead and buried. Other landmarks have vanished entirely, suggesting that the preservation of my homeplace requires more active intervention; a more direct assessment of the powers that are presently reshaping our American countryside.

In my assessment of the drastic changes that have occurred around my homeplace, I am reminded of the two interpretations of the Cherokee word Chickamauga. Most historians agree that the word literally means "river of death," citing numerous stories of tribes who supposedly died of epidemics along the banks of the stream. Others say that this meaning is erroneous, that the name comes from Cherokee words, "Chucama," meaning good, and "Kah," meaning place—thus meaning "Good Place."

For obvious romantic reasons, it is difficult not to choose the latter interpretation. It is becoming increasingly difficult to do so, however, as each return visit reveals a new commercial development: a new business, an outlet mall, a convenience store. With the completion of each project, a part of our family's past is erased. Our very being is thrown into doubt. All that remains is unforgotten images and the possibility that an entire way of life—a way of talking, eating, working and playing—is forever lost.

Trout Fishing in America

Loblolly shack and out back a trout
stream floating away through Vesper's
hushed mizzle. I knock the mud off
my boots and come indoors to slip off
your blue blouse, warming my coarse,
cold hands on your bare breasts. You
laugh and shudder aside from battering
fillets, served snow-white off the ebony
woodstove. We beat back the clock when
at once it's shady night, a few moments for
sipping wine, our bodies leaning closer.
Before sleep, I hear the trout and stream,
trickle over the wish we'll grow old together.

—Edward C. Lynskey

Edward Lynskey lives in Warrenton, Va. His volume of poems, ***The Tree Surgeon's Gift****, is due out this year.*

RURAL LIFE IN APPALA

Woman ready to go to market, Reems Creek section of North Carolina, 1915. From the Southern Appalachian Photographic Archives, Mars Hill College, N.C.

Franklin Sargent starts out to work in the field 1946. Photo by Russell Lee, 1946. From the N

Daughter of a miner with her pet groundhog, Harlan County, Ky., 1946. Photo by Russell Lee. From the National Archives.

Sevier County, Tenn., 1930s. Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University.

CHIA NOW AND THEN

with his mule and sled, Harlan County, Ky.,
tional Archives.

Junior Norton tilling, Madison County, N.C., 1990. Photo by Robert Amberg.

Stonega, Va., 1988. Photo by Randy Ball.

Calenthy Smith, Appalachia, Va., 1988. Photo by Vickie Carter Quigg.

For contributors' notes, see inside back cover.

Wildflower

by

Jeff Daniel Marion

Davey sat staring across the road at bare clay banks and a row of rusting mailboxes warming like loaves of baking bread in July's oven. Mid-morning and he was already wishing the steel penny in yesterday's box of Spanish peanuts had been the nickel he at first believed it to be. He was convinced they used steel pennies just to tease him. No matter—there was the traffic to watch, a chance to count Chevrolets and Fords. But that wasn't as much fun without Charles here to take the Fords and then for an hour they could count cars to see who would win the game.

Davey looked up the road, straining to see if anything appeared on the little rise. Soon the mailman would arrive and shortly afterwards Charles and his mother Orpha would appear, their daily shuffle of three miles down the ridge timed to the slide of hoped for white envelopes into their box. Sometimes only one in the family would come, usually Orpha. Then he would sit in the front porch swing and listen to her and his grandmother Lucy talk. Usually the talk rambled on between the two sisters about how hard Orpha's life was—beans drying up on the vine, her husband sick and without a job, her oldest son Ross in the penitentiary, and now her only daughter Rose and her husband Jess with a new baby and living with them.

"They just ain't no place for me, Lucy. I guess when I die, they'll just have to throw me in a ditch and cover me up."

He knew that comment always signaled the end of the talk when his grandmother would call him in for dinner. They would sit in silence at the long oak table until Lucy said, "For all we are about to receive, Lord, we are grateful. Amen."

He lifted his head to the crunch of gravel and the hollow ring of lids snapping shut: the mailman threw up his hand in greeting and drove on in a swirl of dust. The boy watched the sleek green '47 Chevrolet as it eased down the long strait by the river and then disappeared on the horseshoe curve.

The four of them—Jess, Rose, Orpha and Charles—were walking single file. He studied them like some mesmerizing illustration from a storybook: Jess with his battered gray felt hat, brim snapped low over his brows, his clothes an indistinguishable greasy gray; Rose, ten paces behind, her albino skin and hair like bleached straw, stark against the red clay banks, her face bent down to the swaddled bundle in her arms; Orpha picking her way with a hickory walking stick; Charles, taking long strides, cardboard box under his arm and something strange about the way he kept reaching to brush at his left eye.

He waited until they had reached the mailboxes, Orpha's fingers trembling with a single letter in her hand, before he yelled: "What say old hossfly?"

Charles set his cardboard box in the shade, then scrambled up the bank in a streak of dust and spray of gravel. In a diving leap he landed on the boy, pinning him instantly.

"Now say 'uncle' before this hossfly bites your sorry old butt. Say it. Come on now—say it, durn you."

"It—it—it," the boy yelled and then spasms of laughter shook them both as they rolled in the grass. Charles lay flat on his back and stared for a moment as a cloud passed over the sun.

"You know what? You bout made me forget what I brought you. Hold on here, hoss, and I'll go get my box."

He watched Charles slip down the bank cross the road to retrieve his box.

"I bet you ain't got no idea what's in here. I found him yesterday morning out in the garden. Mama says she's tired of him eating on her 'maters—so I says, 'Well,

I'll just take him down to Davey and let him eat off of him and Lucy for a while."

He pulled back the flaps on the box as Davey stood up to look in.

"You didn't carve your name on this one."

"Nope. This one's yours. We're going to put your name on him."

Some scattered plantain leaves, bits of grass and a single yellow tomato littered the bottom of the box. The terrapin had retreated to one corner, its head and legs tucked in. Davey studied the intricate ridges outlining each platelet, the subtle shading of yellow and orange markings tinged with red, the bark-like texture of its shell.

He remembered the summer two years ago when Rose and Charles and he had climbed the ridge back of this farm to the old apple orchard his grandfather had started forty years ago.

"Remember that box turtle Rose found in the old apple orchard?"

"Yeah. She's always finding stuff the rest of us don't see. Must be because she always gets up close and squinches her eyes." He thought a while, then continued, "She give that turtle to me. Said here's what you been looking for, Charles."

Charles lifted the terrapin from the box and handed it to Davey.

"Careful he don't piss on you. Them things is full of piss."

Davey laughed and cradled the little painted helmet in his hands.

"You know what I wish? I wish we were all back up there on the mountain in old Maude's house."

Rose had first led them there six years ago. She had called it her secret place and had told them stories about old Maude who had long white hair down to her thighs, wandered the mountainside casting a curse on anyone who set foot on her land. Rose said Maude knew magic potions and spells, that she had taught her some of her cures and remedies. Now the place was but a shack with empty windows, open to passing wasps, an occasional possum.

"Yeah, Rose always liked to hide up there. Ever time she got in a fuss with mama, that's where she'd go. Mama never knowed where she was. But I always did."

Davey placed the terrapin back in the box, watched him peek out and start toward the tomato. Davey looked over at Charles, wondering at the change in tone, almost like clouds darkening the sun for a moment.

Charles crouched, his arms around his knees, and hands cupped to his mouth.

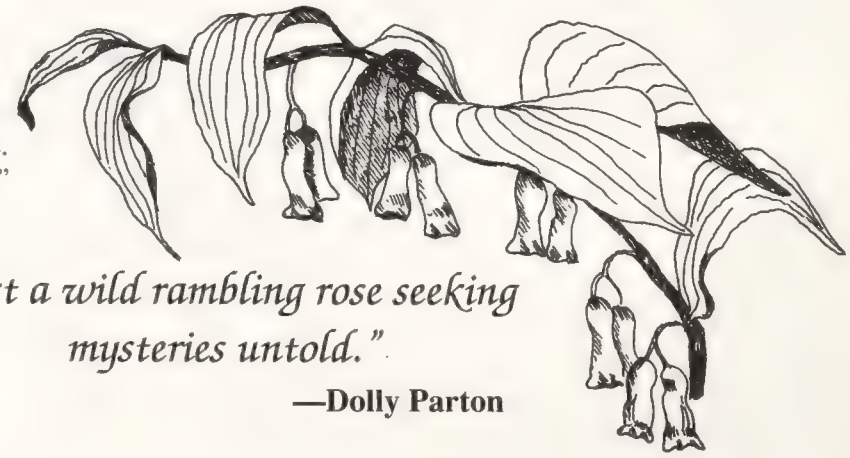
S q u a a a a a ck.

Then again he blew across his thumbs, the quavering blade of grass lifting in another crow call.

"I still can't call them as good as Rose can. Or whistle. They ain't no bird she can't whistle like. You still got that pawpaw whistle she made you?"

Davey sat up, studied a circling hawk, watched him wheel toward the pine thicket on the ridge.

"Yeah."



"Just a wild rambling rose seeking mysteries untold."

—Dolly Parton

He was back in old Maude's house watching Rose's hands shape the pawpaw whistle, listening to her recite the names of wildflowers on the mountainside—pipsisewa, columbine, stonecrop, maypop, trillium, and touch-me-not. More than a cousin, she had been friend, sister and mother to him. Four years ago when Lucy had handed him his mother's cameo as keepsake on the day after her funeral, he had rubbed the raised white face with his thumb and, looking up into his grandmother's eyes, had said, "Rose." Lucy had looked down at him steadily, then said, "Son, you've got to stay with me now. I know it's hard for you, what with losing your daddy in the war and now your mama gone. But I'll do the best I can for you." But Rose was the only person who could lift Davey and Charles from their dark moods. All that had changed when Jess appeared, a workhand who wandered in two years ago to help during tobacco cutting season. Davey had disliked him instantly, watching the water in the washbasin darken from the scrubbing of his hands. The smell of soured milk clung to him as he passed Davey on his way to the dinner table.

"Da—vey. Cha—rles. Come on boys, dinner's ready."

Davey gathered up the box and the two of them walked toward the two-story house. He set the box on the front porch swing. Charles had already flung open the screen door and was making his way back toward the kitchen.

"Something smells real good, Aunt Lucy."

Lucy, red-faced and sweating, strands of iron gray hair falling across her eyes, bent over the wood cookstove, lifting palm-sized biscuits from the warmer.

"Go on in and set at the big table, Charles. We'll be ready in a little bit. Davey, you go on and sit beside Charles."

Davey stood beside Charles watching him wring his hands clean of the lye soap, squeezing the water back into the white enamel pan. Davey dipped his hands into the cloudy water, swished the foamy scud, then reached for the dry cloth hanging from a nail by the washstand. He noticed the dark streaks on the cloth. In the instant he turned to face the table, the scent of soured milk rose to his nostrils and he found himself pressed against Jess.

"Watch your step, Davey. You're going to trip over your own two feet."

Charles was quick to come to Davey's defense. "Why don't you watch

where you're going, Jess?"

"Well, Charles, who yanked your tail? You going to give me some more of your lip?"

"Now everybody just set down here—we're ready to eat."

Lucy placed a final bowl on the table laden already with a stack of sweet corn on the cob, chunks of butter oozing down the sides, a mounded bowl of McCaslin green beans, sliced tomatoes, fried okra, and a pan of biscuits.

They all gathered around the table and Lucy gave her usual blessing. She sat at the head—to her right was Orpha, then Jess and Rose. Davey sat to Lucy's left with Charles beside him.

Silence hung over the table like a shadow. Davey wanted to break the mood, to bring back all those times at the table when he and Charles and Rose would hardly be able to eat for all the seemingly endless stream of words about what they had seen that morning, the hummingbird's nest in the beech down near the granary, the barnswallows swerving in their sharp v's to skim mosquitoes from the surface of the pond, the doe and her fawn at the edge of the pasture. But now no words came.

It was Charles who spoke.

"Rose, how about you carving Davey's initials on that box turtle. You could shape letters better than me."

Rose continued to stare at her food, then lifted her head and looked from Charles to Davey. Her hand fluttered up to twirl a strand of stray hair.

"If you ain't going to tell them, I will," Jess said, turning to Rose.

Charles looked at Jess as if he had been slapped hard across the face. He sat with both hands on the table, his table knife clenched in his right.

Lucy glanced around the table. "How about some more bread? Anybody want some more? I'll just get some fresh hot biscuits."

"Lucy, they's plenty already on the table, honey," Orpha said, puzzled.

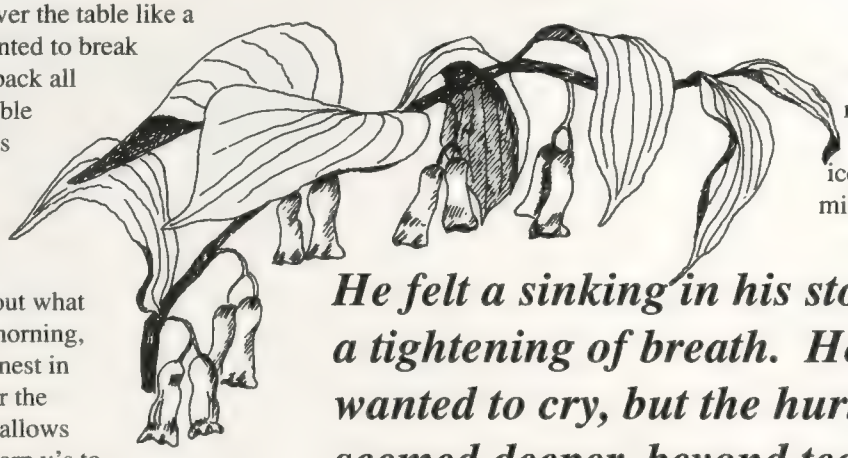
"What is it, Rose? Are you going to carve them initials for Davey or not?"

Now Charles held Rose by a stare. Davey stared at Jess who was helping himself to more bread.

"Why don't you just shut up and eat, little brother." Jess continued to eat, pausing only long enough to spit out the one sentence.

"I ain't your little brother. Because Rose married you don't make you nothing to me."

"Oh Lordy, oh Lordy mercy," Orpha moaned. "When I die they won't be nobody here to see me buried. They'll just have to throw me in the ditch and let the buzzards get me. But it don't matter about me. I just want everybody to be happy and get along. That's all I want—just so's everybody is happy."



He felt a sinking in his stomach, a tightening of breath. He wanted to cry, but the hurt seemed deeper, beyond tears.

"Now look what you've done, little brother. You've got your mother all upset."

Suddenly the baby began to cry, little mewling wails. Rose rocked her in her arms, trying to shush her cries with humming.

Davey could see the baby's head barely peeking through the blanket bundle, pink-faced and squinched in her crying. He had held the baby once a few weeks ago, and the whole roomful of company had laughed when he mentioned how warm she felt sitting on his lap, only to discover his soaked pants leg.

"Rose, why don't you let me take the baby while you eat," Lucy suggested.

Rose got up from the table, pushed her chair back.

"No, Aunt Lucy, I'll tend to her myself."

She made her way back to the living room rocker. They could hear her begin to sing, the squeak-squawk of the old rocker off-key.

"We're leaving, little brother. Right after dinner. Got some business in town, then we're going to Detroit."

Davey expected Charles to scream out in protest, leap forward to stop everything, but he only sat there staring down at his food.

Orpha had begun to dab at her eyes with the edge of her apron.

"Now Charles, honey, it's going to be all right. They'd done told me. They got to get their start."

Lucy rose from her chair.

"Everybody just sit still. I've got some new made ice cream. It's just what you boys need."

Davey had watched her make the ice cream that morning—eggs, milk, and cocoa—the whirr of the eggbeater as Lucy whisked the contents into a chocolatey mix. She always froze the ice cream in the ice cube trays, leaving the cube sections out. Sometimes Davey would get an entire tray to himself.

He glanced over at Charles, who was looking down into his plate and biting his lower lip, then across the table at Jess who was helping himself to the last portion of beans. Davey wanted to hit him hard, to knock him flat on his back, to leap astraddle his chest and ram his fist into Jess's face again and again. He wouldn't even stop for him to cry "uncle." Jess was taking Rose away, and nothing would ever be the same. He would have no one to lift him from his dark moods. Davey swallowed hard to fight the hot rush of tears.

A car horn sounded three times in short succession.

"Jess, he's here," Rose called from the living room.

Stuffing a last bite of biscuit into his mouth, Jess pushed away from the table.

"That'll be Ernest." He looked over

at Orpha. "He's taking us into town to settle this business. Then Rose and me will catch that bus for Detroit."

"Now everybody just don't be in such a rush. You've not had any of this fresh ice cream." Lucy returned from the kitchen carrying four bowls of chocolate ice cream, the little scoops like curled shavings looped back on themselves.

As Lucy placed a bowl in front of Davey, he sensed the now familiar lingering odor, but Jess was already in the living room with Rose.

Three more honks from the horn.

"Be right there," Jess yelled as the two of them stepped off the front porch and started down to the road.

"Charles, you're not eating your ice cream." Lucy looked at Charles for a moment, then turned to Orpha who was dabbing at her eyes again.

"Seems like I just feel awful burdened. Lucy, honey, let's you and me go in the living room where we can talk." Orpha took off her wire-rimmed glasses and wiped both eyes with her apron.

"You boys finish your ice cream—then you can go outside and play." Lucy finished with a clatter of dishes, collecting empty plates and carrying them into the kitchen. She would come back later and spread a cloth over the remaining bowls of okra, corn, and beans, safekeeping from the flies till supper.

Davey looked over at Charles whose ice cream was a muddy puddle.

"Charles, we might as well go out and carve on that box turtle."

Charles sat motionless, still biting his lower lip. He stood up and looked down at Davey who could then see the welling of tears.

"I got to go" was all he said as Davey sat listening to the screech of the backflung screen door, then the slam as it sprang back shut.

Alone at the table he sat staring out the window: first the well house, then the garden, and in the far distance he could see Bays Mountain. A single fly hummed by his hand, settled on the rim of his ice cream bowl. If Charles were here—with a sure sweep of the hand he'd catch the fly, pluck off his wings, and fling him out the door. He felt a sinking in his stomach, a tightening of breath. He wanted to cry, but the hurt seemed deeper, beyond tears.

Orpha's voice rang clearly from the other room.

"Lucy, I ain't told you the whole story. At first Jess told me they was going to give up the baby for adoption. Said they couldn't afford to get a start in Detroit with a baby. I begged them to leave her with me. I'd take care of her and raise her just like my own. But they wouldn't have it. Said no, they'd already made their minds up."

The rhythmic squeaking of Lucy's rocker slowed a bit, then resumed its regular pace. Davey sat alert, his cheeks flushed, tears burning his eyes.

"And then this morning I asked them how they was getting to Detroit—where their money was coming from. Jess wouldn't say nothing, just stared at me. Finally Rose broke down and cried and said they was getting money from the man who was arranging the adoption. Said that was how they was getting their start."

Davey stood up, eased his chair back and tiptoed across the room into the kitchen. He stood by the screen door waiting for the voice to resume.

"Oh Lucy, I hate what I done. I slapped her hard across the face and told her that she ought to be ashamed. She just stared at me." The rocking slowed. "She ain't said nothing to me since."

Davey eased the screen door open as Lucy's rocking became faster. He did not let the door slam. Carefully he made his way around the house to the front porch and retrieved the box.

With each step the words began to ring in his head: Rose is gone, the baby is gone. Charles is gone. My mother is gone. My father is gone. The words seemed to have weight, to bear down harder each step. His chest pounded and he wanted to cry out. He opened his mouth, but all he heard was an exhaled heavy breath followed quickly by the insuck of air. Up and up the crisscrossing cow trails he climbed the ridge.

Gone, he thought. Why does everything have to be gone. Like the book he had read in school last Spring. The hero had died in the end, but Davey would not believe. Three times he read back through the book, looking carefully, sure each time he would discover the clue that could change the ending, set his hero free, alive and well. There must be a buried secret somewhere, if only he could find it.

He sat down. Here on the crest of the ridge he could see his grandmother's house, the road beyond it, the river in the distance with another series of ridges jagging against the sky. He reached into the box and lifted the terrapin out onto the ground. In a few minutes his head peeked out, and Davey watched him crawl all the way to a stand of cedars some twenty feet away. "Goodbye," he said, then turned back toward home. The terrapin, nameless, disappeared into the underbrush.

Jeff Daniel Marion is a teacher and poet in residence at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn. His books include ***Out In The Country***, ***Back Home*** *and* ***Tight Lines***. ***Hello, Crow****, a book for children, is forthcoming from Orchard Books of New York in 1991. Appalachian Consortium Press recently published a collection of his poems,* ***Vigils: Selected Poems***.

Line drawing by Tony Feathers.

Late Season

Wearing skin that fits like pods of dried beans,
her breasts shrunken to cucumbers
above a belly resting like a soft pumpkin
on her thighs, Jane sits on the edge of bones,
wonders why some are picked fresh
from this garden, gathered in rosy firmness
for the cellars of earth.
"Maybe I'm an onion," she answers to the query on
food, and nods agreement to the thought that rotting
on the vine is one kind of harvest.

—Lillie D. Chaffin

Lillie D. Chaffin lives in Clearwater, Fla.

Photo by Kenneth Murray.

Profits and Losses: The Coming of Coal Mining to Eastern Kentucky

by
Robert Weise

Appalachian thinkers have often seen the region as a Third World Country, with giant companies coming in, stripping the land of its rich resources of timber and coal, then taking their profits away with them.

But Rob Weise, who studied Floyd County in Eastern Kentucky for the past two years, sees a more complicated picture of tension and cooperation as the land changed from a farming to a mining economy. Many of the rural residents lost. Some gained. And the face of Eastern Kentucky changed forever.

Sometime in 1910, a coal company agent traveled up the right fork of Beaver Creek in Floyd County, Ky., to the farmhouse of Daniel and Sallie Martin. Farmers like the Martins had, over the years, grown used to haggling with buyers about mineral rights. Individual speculators and corporate agents began coming to the area in 1887, and as the farmers became more aware of the value of the coal lodged in their ridges and hillsides, the price went up. Mineral rights that sold for 50 cents an acre in 1887 often went for $10 an acre in 1910.

On this occasion, however, the coal company bought more than mineral rights. For $25,000, the Martins sold their entire farm of 453 acres, the surface as well as the minerals, and moved their family out of Floyd County.

Two years later, the Elk Horn Coal Company built the mining town of Wayland on the old Daniel Martin farm. Several smaller camps soon appeared nearby, and Elk Horn began intensive mining operations that dramatically transformed life in Right Beaver.

The coming of coal to the Central Appalachians challenged the farmers' understanding of the world and forced them to redefine their place in it. They encountered predicaments, headaches and opportunities that they had not known before. Smoke-belching freight trains, immigrant miners who often could not speak English, and new, bustling company towns all accompanied mining.

In Floyd County today, those company towns are no longer new or bustling. Elk Horn Coal, now owned by an oil company based in Richmond, Va., left Wayland for Prestonsburg, Ky., during the 1950s, selling its houses to its employees. The population of 50,000, most of whom live evenly dispersed along the rivers and creeks, presents an unusual mix of a rural culture within an industrial economy, resulting in a great diversity of wealth, living conditions and cultural outlook. Poverty is a major problem. It is an industrial poverty caused by an undertaxed, dominant coal industry and an unresponsive county political system. It is the poverty of the unemployed, the disabled and the welfare recipient.

This contemporary Floyd County, with all its industrial poverty, was what the future farmers were purchasing as they sold the coal companies their mineral rights and their land back in the early part of the century. And for the most part, they were purchasing that future willingly. That is not, however, the picture which emerges from the scholarly literature on the period. Most Appalachian scholars, in fact, assume that mountain farmers opposed the emerging coal industry, preferring instead their traditional agrarian way of life. For example, economist John Gaventa, head of the Highlander Research Center in New Market, Tenn., says that the mountaineers were "rebels of industrialization," who sought only to obtain "harmony with nature."

This view, however, reflects Gaventa's own ideals more than the realities of mountain society. It is a view that casts the farmers in a passive role, unable to confront actively and rationally the issues raised by industrialization. In reality, many farmers, like those on Right Beaver, responded favorably to the changing economic structure, welcoming the chance to earn cash and be able to afford new conveniences for their homes. Sharecroppers, 40 percent of Floyd County farmers in 1890, saw work in the mines as a much more lucrative endeavor than scratching out a living on a hillside farm they did not even own. Landowners saw sales of mineral rights as a way to improve their material condition without having to leave their farms.

Most Appalachian scholars assume that mountain farmers opposed the emerging coal industry, preferring instead their traditional agrarian life. . . It is a view that casts the farmers in a passive role, unable to confront actively and rationally the issues raised by industrialization.

Right Beaver farmers often profited from their early dealings with the coal industry, but, in the long run, those deals made prosperous farms increasingly difficult to maintain. Around Wayland, as elsewhere in Eastern Kentucky, coal mining quickly replaced agriculture as the main source of employment, and the farmer took a back seat to the miner as the central figure in regional history.

The farmers' involvement with the coal industry brought heavy costs that were not always evident at the time decisions were made. The granting of mineral rights, especially, had consequences farmers never anticipated. Although they officially retained use of the property's surface for cultivation, the "broad form" deeds farmers signed gave coal companies the power to "dump, store, and leave upon said land any and all muck, bone, shale, water, or other refuse from said mines," and to "use, divert, dam, and pollute water courses thereon in any and every manner." In short, mining companies could do anything they deemed "necessary and convenient" to extract their minerals, regardless of its effects on farmland.

The environmental destruction legitimated by the broad form deeds spread through the mountains as more and more mines opened up, but the full effects were not felt until the 1950s, when strip mining denuded hillsides, eroded topsoil and clogged creeks and rivers.

But until the days of rampant strip mining, the Martins seemed to have found a way to make the newly-arrived coal industry work to their advantage. Before the advent of coal mining in Floyd County, Daniel had inherited his farm from his father, John, who had settled along the Right Beaver in the 1830s and began growing a wide variety of crops, including corn, wheat, potatoes, and a small amount of tobacco. Cattle and swine foraged freely in the wooded and unfenced hills. John Martin also owned several slaves, a rarity in the mountains. In time, the Martins became one of the largest landowners in the county.

The Martins, however, were not content with farming. While John Martin always considered himself a farmer above all else, he and his eight sons tried their hands in several businesses, including a grist mill, stores, and extensive logging operations. Although initially these ventures made them among the wealthiest citizens of Floyd County, the family soon learned the difficulties of running a business in a cash-poor economy. Often unable to pay back his loans, John Martin spent much of his time in the Floyd Circuit Court watching the county sheriff place liens on his property in case his debts remained unpaid.

When John Martin died in 1883, his sons assumed responsibility for both his property and his financial burden. The cash offered by the mineral buyers provided an obvious opportunity to get back in the black, and the coal industry enabled the Martins to continue their business activities on more solid foundations. In addition, some of the Martin sons became directly involved in coal industry-related transactions. The youngest, Frederick, was himself among the

earliest mineral speculators in the county. In 1887, he bought minerals for 50 cents an acre on four tracts of land, including one owned by his brother, "Big Joe" Martin. Another son, Joel, took over the family logging firm, supplying timber throughout the county both to coal corporations and to the railroads which serviced them.

The Martins were not the only family who profited, at least initially, due to the coming of coal. Even farmers who rejected commercial ventures in the past sometimes tried to take advantage of new opportunities opened by the coal industry. For example, Epperson Collins, a neighbor of the Martins since the 1870s, found his 60-acre plot on the Muddy Branch of the Right Beaver too rough and wild for farming. In 1912 he purchased trees on adjoining property owned by his brothers and sisters and sold the timber to Elk Horn Coal. Elk Horn used the lumber to build the houses and tipples in Wayland.

Epperson's cousin, Dr. M. M. Collins, speculated heavily in coal, oil and natural gas. A Martin family member who lives on Right Beaver today remembers "Doc" Collins somewhat scornfully, saying that as a physician, he "wouldn't go to country folks. He couldn't look [at] someone less fortunate than him . . . .He just doctored and went around making coal deals." Doc Collins's strained relations with farmers highlights the bitterness and condescension that often cropped up between developers and those who eyed the coal industry with suspicion.

In spite of the suspicions of some Right Beaver citizens, the coal industry quickly became a permanent fixture on the landscape. Farmers and miners alike struggled to reap the benefits of both the agricultural and industrial worlds. While wives of miners who lived in Wayland put out small vegetable gardens to cut down on store bills, many farmers left the hollows during the off season to work in the mines for extra cash.

Many of John Martin's grandchildren and great-grandchildren became teachers, store owners and professionals. Those who stuck to farming probably did better in the coal camp years than ever before, as they supplied produce to wage-earning miners and the company stores. During the Depression, farm owners were spared the harshest effects of the crumbled economy. "The way it used to be in the hard times," recalls a Martin family member, "we farmed as much as we worked the mines because it was the only way we were going to make it. We owned [chicken and livestock], and we had it good."

Wayland, Ky., ca. 1912.

Although farmers in the mountains prospered during the early coal years, they found it increasingly difficult to stay in farming. Over the next several decades, the incompatibility of farming and the mining industry rendered successful agriculture virtually impossible. Thousands of mine laborers set up their homes in the fertile bottomlands, and coal companies extended their operations deep into the hollows, absorbing vast areas of arable land. Then, starting in the 1950s, the mining industry used the "necessary and convenient" clause of the broad form deeds to justify strip mining, turning hundreds of thousands of farm acres into permanent wasteland.

In Floyd County today there are too many people and not enough available land to support commercially viable farms. Throughout the county, family gardens, small fields and a few head of cattle in the more remote areas intermingle with mechanic shops, gas stations and convenience stores. Houses are mostly single-story wood structures or metal trailers, but large duplexes, originally meant for two or more families, dominate the main streets of Wayland and other old company towns. Within the past 20 years, more expensive and fashionable brick ranch houses have appeared in the county, often surrounded by lawn ornaments and a chain-link fence. In these homes live the ubiquitous lawyers and mine operators, many of whom made their fortunes in the oil crisis and consequent coal boom of the early 1970s.

Through all the changes that have swept through Eastern Kentucky since the 1960s, Floyd County residents have made a conscious effort to preserve both their farming and their coal camp pasts. A mountain crafts shop operates out of David, and each September, the Slone Mountain Squirrel Festival features old-time country music and roast squirrel. And twice a year, the high school in Wheelwright, formerly a coal company "model town," puts out *Mantrip*, one of the better Appalachian oral history publications around.

But the rural and industrial components of Floyd County society have yet to be fully harmonized, and the conflicts and dilemmas that arose out of that combination 100 years ago still exist today. A major step toward reconciling Eastern Kentucky's rural character and industrial ingredients occurred in the 1988 state elections, in which which voters passed a state referendum disallowing the broad form deed as authorization for strip mining. The referendum, sponsored by the Kentuckians for the Commonwealth came after several years of hard-fought battles and is a momentous victory against the coal industry's dominance in the mountains.

Though they are no longer among Floyd County's wealthiest, several of John Martin's great-grandchildren still live and prosper in Wayland. Many of them worked energetically on behalf of the anti-broad form deed referendum. They, like their great-grandfather, recognize their own capabilities in effecting change during difficult circumstances. On Right Beaver Creek, the efforts of John Martin, his neighbors and their descendents have been crucial in plotting the course of its history.

Robert Weise is a graduate student in history at the University of Virginia where he studies Appalachian history and the South. A native of Wisconsin, Weise has lived in Floyd County, Ky., off and on since 1986.

Robert Yates, Embreeville, 1926.

"You Didn't Think About Tomorrow"

A Family Remembrance Embreeville, Tennessee

Cathy Whaley

When the U.S. government sent photographers to Appalachia to document the ravages of the Great Depression in the 1930s, they didn't have any trouble finding evidence of desperate poverty. The pictures documenting widespread misery became etched on our consciousness. This was Appalachia. But Cathy Whaley noticed a discrepancy between that image and the stories she heard from her family about life in the mountains in the 1930s. When she interviewed them, a different picture emerged.

From the time I was five, I heard stories from my mother, aunts and uncles about growing up in Embreeville, Tenn., in the 1930s: about my Uncle Earl setting the woods on fire, my mother being frightened that people might drown as she watched them go deep in the Nolichucky River to be baptized, or the time Uncle Robert knocked Aunt Elsie cold with a lard bucket in the smokehouse.

I wondered why, considering that my mother and her siblings were raised during the Depression, they have nothing but fond memories of growing up.

They explained that our family was luckier than most. My grandfather worked throughout the Depression years as an office foreman at the mine. And, because of the boom in the photography industry, the manganese, zinc and iron mine in Embreeville provided steady work throughout the 1930s for many of the area's 900 residents.

Embreeville sounded like a fine place to grow up in those days. The area had been a thriving mining and farming center along the banks of the Nolichucky River in East Tennessee since the mid-1800s, they reported. The place had a distinguished past. My aunt Ruby O'Dell told me, "Embreeville was named after Elijah and Elihu Embree. One of them was a printer, I think started that old Jonesborough paper. And the Embree Iron Company was named after them." The Embrees were a Quaker family, and the paper she is referring to was *The Manumission Intelligencer* (later called *The Emancipator*), the first abolitionist newspaper in the United States, published by Elihu Embree.

Today, according to my aunt Elsie Riley, Embreeville consists of approximately 1,000 people who commute to jobs in Johnson City and Erwin. The community has seen its share of grief. By 1960 the last of the ore was removed from the earth, and the mine closed. The mine became a site for a toxic waste dump. In 1979 residents protested because the dump was leaking into the river and polluting ground water. Their protests, which included laying themselves down in front of trucks carrying the toxic wastes to the dump, succeeded in getting the dump closed. But they have not been able to get the dump cleaned up.

None of my aunts or uncles have lived in Embreeville for many years. They have, however, remained in the area, and were glad to talk about their memories.

***Ruby O'Dell**, Johnson City, retired machine operator, Leon-Ferenbach rug yarn manufacturer.*

Papa worked at the mines, and we lived in a company house. We paid $2.00 a month because the house had a bathroom in it. The ones that didn't have a bathroom was $1.00 and $1.50. The company owned the houses.

There was the Nolichucky River right there. It was so pretty down there and the mountain there behind us. We had berries all around and Mama would can all kinds of berries all summer.

Back about the time of the Depression we had a radio. Our house would be full on Saturday nights to listen to the Grand Ole Opry. We had fall festivals, cakewalks and ice cream suppers.

We walked a quarter of a mile to and from Embreeville School, which had eight grades. We walked through snow knee deep, and everyday they gave you cod liver oil and a slice of apple to wash it down. I don't think I took any after that.

Photos pages 29 and 30 courtesy of Earl Yates. Photos page 31 by Cathy Whaley.

***Robert Yates**, Gray, Tenn. Retired production superintendent of carpet division of Leon-Ferenbach; co-owner, Tri-City Lettering Service.*

I guess you might say we were more fortunate than some. Papa had a job when other people didn't. Most of the people had a job (in Embreeville). They didn't make much money, but they had something to eat, so it really didn't affect everyone as much as it did the rest of the country. We were so far back in the hills, I don't know whether they knew there was a Depression or not.

I used to put stock on the shelves of the company store for $1.25 a day. Those miners, when times were tough, just made 75 cents a day. Of course prices...you could get a Coke for a nickel and a loaf of bread for a dime. Seventy-five cents a day isn't going to buy you luxuries, that's for sure.

We were one of the few fortunate ones. Papa used to take us to Erwin every Saturday in his T-Model Ford and get us a cone of ice cream. See, that was a thrill right there.

People lived healthier then. You didn't have to worry about keeping up with the Joneses because the Joneses didn't have nothing.

I used to walk over to Erwin when I was 12 years old. Take me a quarter and get in the movies for a dime. Buy me a nickel hamburger and a nickel hot dog and a nickel Pepsi. A quarter really took you somewhere.

That was a busy place over there. They had that company store and Saturday was overflowing just like the K-Mart in Johnson City. I wouldn't ever want to go back, really, because they don't have a McDonald's.

The Yates family, Embreeville, Tenn., in the early 1930s. Clockwise from top left: Ruby and Mama; Robert Yates; Elsie, Ruby and Robert Yates; and Hubert Yates.

***Hubert Yates,** Jonesborough, Tenn. Retired shift foreman, Leon-Ferenbach.*

We made out fairly good because we raised most of our own vegetables. We had two big gardens with corn, cabbage, lettuce, tomatoes—the basics. We also had four hogs and about a hundred chickens. Mama used to go out and wring their necks. They would flop around pretty hard for about 30 minutes. She would pick the feathers off, then we would have fried chicken every Sunday.

When you start down (in Embreeville), our house is on the right on the hill. We called it the Hillside. We had woods and plenty of animals—squirrels, rabbits and black bears. We used to hunt a lot. We used to eat chinquipins, which were small, round nuts not larger than a pea, like an English walnut. There were a lot of field creases, which was green and real flat and tastes like spinach. We would also get poke when it first starts growing and make greens.

***Elsie Riley**, Johnson City. Retired machine operator, Leon-Ferenbach.*

I don't think we missed out on anything because they was so many of us. We always had a good, warm house, some good beds, plenty of quilts—Mama quilted all the time. We had plenty of food. She canned everything you could put in a jar.

What we didn't make ourselves, we got at the company store. People would go down there and run a charge account. They had anything from shoes, coats, any kind of clothing, and you could buy all of this in barrels like sugar and all this hoop cheese—all this old-timey stuff. We didn't hurt for anything, really.

The house had six rooms and a double porch and a smokehouse in the back. We had indoor plumbing, electricity and hot water all the time. We had a dining room, kitchen, heat with wood and coal, and we cooked on a cook stove.

Mama and Papa had to help (others) because they didn't have much. She would send things she had canned, and every time she killed chickens for us, she'd send them one. We were always giving away stuff to people.

The family today, clockwise from upper left: Ruby O'Dell, Hubert Yates, Elsie Riley and Robert Yates.

We had the post office. There was this big ball diamond down there where they played ball. Dr. Willis was the company doctor. He had a nice house, and everybody depended on him. Any time you needed a doctor, you just called him. And there was this midwife everybody called Big Mammy.

There were a lot of people in company houses. When that company shut down, that's when everybody had to start getting out or either get some land and build a house to stay. Some of the Company houses were torn down. It crippled the whole community. Papa hated to leave because he had been there all his life. That was the only reason (he moved to Johnson City).

Now I don't recognize the place. They built houses on the ball diamond where we used to play. They've changed the old road. It's nothing compared to what it used to be. I didn't seem like the same place. Where we used to live on the Hillside, it's grown up so bad you can't even see that there is a house up there.

I tell you one thing that was special was the people. It was like one big, happy family. Say if the husband got sick and couldn't work, he had no pay. OK, in come the neighbors. People took care of them. If they needed money, they would chip in. There were no strangers down there. I'd hate to think of how many hundreds of people from one end of that place to the other that knew everybody.

People got more done then. Everybody's rushing today. People were laid back, and you didn't worry about tomorrow. Now, you've got to get this or that done. You didn't have to worry about income tax, taxes on the house or insurance. It didn't cost a lot to live. A lot of people might have thought it was a poor way to live, but we thought we was pretty lucky.

Embreeville, a slide show and videotape, is a 25-minute documentary directed by Richard M. Kesner about the distant and recent history of the East Tennessee community. For more information contact the Archives of Appalachia at East Tennessee State University at 615-929-4338.

Genus

Be wary.
Blackberry brambles lurk in weeds
like a cougar stalking his prey.
Turn your back and you'll get
Zapped!
right in the seat of the britches.

Calm down and smell the roses.
Near the swamp 'longside the dogleg
fence,
a cloud of mauve smoke beckons.
Dare to pick a bouquet and
Thunderation!
Vicious incurved barbs trap your fingers
with a bulldog grip.

Give up and head for home.
Why not take that shortcut through the
meadow?
Wham Bam!
You flop flat on your face, lassoed
around both ankles by fire-toothed vines
sprangled all over the ground.
Well, anyway, you've found a dewberry
patch.

Now I've searched and researched, and
nowhere
can I find a generic list for hazards like
these
so a body could be forewarned.

Not to worry.

I'm recommending to Mr. Asa Gray,
when he
revises all 1,632 pages of his Manual of
Botany,
that he include a brand-new chapter.
You'll recognize it right off.
Just look under the D's for
Dam'briar.

—Ruth Trimble

*Ruth Trimble, who lives in Kingsport, Tenn., pursues interests in regional archaeology, botany and genealogy. Her poetry has been published in **Appalachian Heritage**, **Katuah**, and **Grab-a-Nickel**.*

*Cathy Whaley is the co-editor of **Mockingbird**, ETSU's student literary magazine, and a student worker for the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services.*

Some Women and Their Art

Think of art as experience
expanded beyond its common place.

Grandmothers who in one complete circle wring
the necks of chickens for a Sunday banquet,
but on Saturday nights
put on daring dresses with red slips
and go square dancing
at the local AMVET building. Eyes closed,
they pirouette,
dancers in their own Swan Lake,

mill workers with names
like Madolin, Hazel, and Iva who wind
perfect silk onto bobbins. One
named Ella Mae, (1900-1929), studied the shape
of women's rights. Angry,
she raised her voice, sang hymns
on Wednesday at the Methodist church, and was shot
on Saturday. Her friends wrote her name, again and again,
in diaries for their granddaughters,

round-shouldered women with square faces
whose wide hands work flour and lard lightly
into thin sheets, folding them
carefully like origami
over apple and cherry pies. In summer, they draw close
the borders of their low farmhouses
with larkspur, delphiniums, and sweet williams,
a Monet garden among stones and clay,

and ancient widows who sit at their picture windows,
quilting the quiet appliques of their lives,
pattern upon pattern,
like Indian women who wheeled stories
around stone water jars,
turning rainy Monday nights of eternal Novembers.

—Beverly Bailey

First Generation, Bachelor of Arts

Leaving home, she
arrived to find herself
outclassed and
outnumbered. She
watched the style,
took up the talk -
treading warily on
the edge of their
society. The education
outstripped them in
content and amount.
The ground uncovered
at home, fertile
for cultivation.

Coming home, she
found herself alone,
outnumbered. She
knew the style, took
back the talk -
treading warily on
the edge of their
society. Suspect
for what she
knew and they
could not imagine -
in the distance she
sat alone - singing.

—Jane Hicks

Hired Girl

In your eyes,
That look of a man:
I go carrying cups,
Linens, morning's eggs,
Knowing your eyes.

Priming the pump
And filling buckets,
There is no comfort
To cold water, to
My days like water.

And you watch me.
One day you will marry me.
Or you will kill me.
Or perhaps both,
One after the other.

—J. B. Goodenough

Beverly Bailey teaches at Seminole Community College, Sanford, Fla. Ms. Bailey won first place in the Gwendolyn Brooks Writers' Association of Florida.

Jane Hicks teaches at Sullivan North and Sullivan East high schools in Sullivan County, Tenn. She is currently writing a book on unionist activity in East Tennessee.

J. B. Goodenough is a Kentucky-born New Englander recently transplanted to Pittsburgh. Her first collection of poems was ***Dower Land*** *and her second collection is due within the year from the St. Andrews Press in North Carolina.*

Barbara Presnell is currently the Writer-in-Residence at Hazard Community College in Hazard, Ky. Her poetry has recently appeared in ***Laurel Review***, ***IowaWoman***, *and* ***Kalliope***.

Cancer, His 83rd Year

In the garden this year's tomatoes
are almost gone. Soon he'll pull
the dead plants and dig them under
for winter. One tight green one
big as his fist bends its weak branch
groundward like a willow.
He must wait until it reddens in sun
or drops.

Inside, the wife is making pickles,
putting up five more years' worth
to store with dozens already crowding
the pantry shelf. Each year he says
he'll quit the cucumbers for her sake,
but he loves the way they spring out quickly,
grabbing hold and twining up
on everything they touch.
So every year instead he gets for her
more jars, and every year keeps to himself that
neither of them have stomachs fit for dill.

It's the waiting, he knows, that works her now,
and it if could be him not her, he'd gladly switch.
Or go inside right now and get that pistol
from his dresser drawer, sometimes
he thinks he should.
But what he's thinking now is this:
there's one last cucumber on the vine,
one cheek-red tomato,
and he wants them warm from sun
and juicing down his chin
this one more day.

—Barbara Presnell

Reviews

Invitation to Kim
by George Scarborough

Iris Press
1407 Union Ave.
Memphis, Tenn. 38104
1989 $14.95 (hardcover)

Bill Dockery

Let's start with a warning.

George Scarborough takes no prisoners. He has no pity for readers seeking quick rewards or budget thrills. He doesn't meet anyone halfway. He demands all the resources of a reader's mind and a full measure of attention. The East Tennessee native, now an Oak Ridger, is about serious business in his poetry, and he will not carelessly give away even a scrap of hard-earned meaning.

His latest collection of poetry, *Invitation to Kim*, edited by Phyllis Tickle, presents not a Williamsburg blue pastoralism, with dainty cutouts of milk cows and Granny Fannies and other fashionable signs of pseudo-country living. His is a ruralism that reflects the pain of growing up a sensitive child in an East Tennessee sharecropper's large family.

The title poem sounds one of Scarborough's predominant themes and also provides the structure around which the poetry is grouped. The "Kim" who receives Scarborough's invitation is a younger brother, and the book's aim is to explain the poet's life to him.

In fact, the aim of all Scarborough's poetry seems to be to explain and understand himself in the context of his family. His father appears frequently in his poems, and Scarbrough makes clear how he feels about his sire.

He writes of his father: "With you I could never win. / I grew up in a striped suit / Hating you for the longest / Childhood on record." The phrase that introduces each verse, "Daddy, you bastard," becomes the title of the poem.

In the poem that gives the book its name, the son writes of a father he cannot please: "...With him, it is / Always something about out- / Comes, a measure of harvests..."

Scarborough's feelings for his mother are just as obvious and just the opposite. In "Winter Bread" he memorializes her in a poem centered on the oak barrel in her kitchen that held meal for the family's bread, "...there is nothing / I would not forego / To lift again / The lid of deep / Unreconstructable / Breath / Of winter bread."

The privations of the family's life are another common theme, one that produces some of Scarborough's best work. "Last Look," a beautifully tight lyric, gives poignant advice on how to leave a house when faced with a move to another sharecropper's shack. "The Sharer" details the conditions of the elder Scarborough's life and work: as a sharecropper, his father is "Free to choose master / Yet bound to be chosen."

Unexpected themes emerge, including a dark sexuality that at times seems to relish punishment. Scarborough, a bachelor, also celebrates his lineage but in "History" admits "...I am perplexed / To be the one to subvert history" because he has remained childless.

The terrain of Southeast Tennessee appears here, the Ocoee and Hiwassee rivers, the town of Benton in Polk County. But rarely is Scarborough's pastoralism a pure appreciation of the landscape. After cataloging the beauties of the land in "Hiwassee River," the poet adds a chilling final line "*...next year* / the dam will be built."

Occasionally the music in a line clinks instead of rings. In "Vacation," for example, Scarborough presents the image of "...a muffled hammer / Halved of its helve," one of those phrases poets write for other poets. Sometimes the complexity of a poem is confounding, not rewarding.

A few critical questions remain after a reading of Scarborough: Can the reader trust Scarbrough's view of reality? How close are the characters in the poems to the people in Scarborough's life? Important questions, but given the power of the poetry, questions with answers that don't really matter.

In *Invitation to Kim* Scarborough has abstracted the universal elements from his land, his family and his own life and transformed them into art that can speak to anyone.

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*Bill Dockery is an editor and reporter for **The Knoxville News Sentinel** and is currently completing a graduate degree in journalism at The University of Tennessee. He was instrumental in reviving the book review section for **The Sentinel.***

Morgan Sexton:
Traditional
Appalachian Ballad Singer.
Rock Dust

June Appal Recordings JA0055
306 Madison Street
Whitesburg, Ky. 41858
1989 $8.00 (LP or Cassette)

Stephanie Smith

Several Christmases ago, a friend gave me two records, one of an Irish old-time string band, and one of an Irish ballad singer. The first, he said, was for fun, and the second was "good" for me. The implication was that the first, being a folk revival production geared specifically for the folk record market, was easier listening than the second, which was essentially field recordings of a non-professional traditional singer. I can say in all truth that this June Appal recording of Morgan Sexton is both fun and good for you.

Morgan Sexton, a retired coal miner, was born in Linefork in Southeastern Kentucky in 1911. The Sexton family was musical; his father made Morgan's first banjo, and gave him lessons on the instrument until his sudden death in the 1918 flu epidemic. Sexton's mother sang, and his brother Howard and sister Hettie both played the banjo. Many of the songs on the album were learned from family members and friends early in Sexton's life.

In his liner notes, Mike Seeger insightfully comments that Sexton "has a very special old-time singing style which takes us back to the feeling from the days when singers used no accompaniment and could ornament the basic melody as they

pleased." Sexton's voice lacks the sonority and smoothness of Frank Proffitt, the noted North Carolina singer and banjo player; nevertheless, it is special and pleasing, adeptly complemented by his haunting and modal two finger, thumb lead banjo accompaniments. I particularly like Sexton's renditions of "Froggy Went A Courtin'" and "Old Grey Beard." Morgan Sexton's voice must have been powerful prior to the onset of his lung disorders caused by rock dust, if this recording is anything to go by.

The nice selection of ballads and songs is rounded out by two instrumentals, "The Last of Callahan" and "Hook and Line." Nephew Lee Sexton's fiddle provides an additional texture to the banjo on two tracks.

The accompanying booklet includes the texts to the songs, for which I was grateful because the voice level on the recording is sometimes lower than that of the banjo. I was also happy to see that Sexton's comments about each song are included. D. Gregory White's documentation is disappointing, however, as he provides little information about the songs and their regional and national contexts, which suggests that he did not take the time to research them in standard works. For example, "Old Grey Beard" and "Old East Virginia" are well-known and appear in a number of song collections, but White provides no commentary on either. The mention of other recordings of the songs would have also enhanced the value of the documentation.

June Appal should be congratulated for producing this album of a clearly outstanding Appalachian traditional singer and instrumentalist. The record is attractively packaged, it is pleasant to listen to, but The Mountain Masters Series would do well to improve the documentation and booklet production quality on future releases. Morgan Sexton and other Mountain Masters deserve better.

Stephanie Smith is a research associate in the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services at East Tennessee State University. A folklorist and librarian, she is particularly interested in Scottish and Appalachian traditional and contemporary song.

Fiddle and Bow

by Robert Taylor, Jr.

Algonquin Books
Chapel Hill, N.C. 1985
$15.95 (hardcover)

Jane Harris Woodside

At first, the concept behind Robert Taylor, Jr.'s, novel, *Fiddle and Bow*, seems more revolutionary than it really is. In his prefatory notes, the author explains that the book is based on his own family history, that of the Taylors of Carter County in East Tennessee, a family that has given the state prominent lawyers, governors, physicians, judges, senators and ministers. Some of the characters are relatives the writer knew personally. Most reflect the impressions he has received from listening to family stories, looking long and hard at photographs and reading written accounts.

Taylor is certainly not the first novelist to write about his own family. However, most authors dress them up in disguises (some more transparent than others). Taylor has dispensed with the disguises. He hasn't changed the names. You could argue that inventing names is a waste when your forebears came from a place really called Happy Valley, when your family tree includes a Napoleon Bonaparte Taylor or a William Shakespeare Taylor and Love appears at regular intervals as a first, middle or last name.

But of course, by using their own names, he is making quite clear that he is blending fact with fiction, objective reality with his own impressions. This does not make it so much an unusual novel, as the blurb on the dust jacket proclaims, as a novel which is unusually honest about its sources and the process that produces it.

Some of those sources are actually included in the book. In addition to a genealogical chart, there is an album of family photographs that helped to inspire the novel. Although I initially found such material a little distracting, it became invaluable as I settled into the story of the six generations of Taylors. The novel begins in 1860 with a glimpse of the Reverend Nathaniel Greene Taylor, a second-generation Tennessean, and three of his young sons, 16-year old James, 11-year old Alf and 10-year Bob. As the family members eye each other with affection and a trace of wariness, three of the main themes of the novel—the power of words, the power of music and the central importance of family—are sounded.

Bob and Alf grew up to become the best-known members of a distinguished family. Ironically, the brothers, raised by a father who valued unity above all, established their reputations by running against each other for the governorship in 1886 in a state still suffering from the divisions produced by the Civil War. Bob, a Democrat, sported a white rose, while Alf, the Republican candidate, wore a red one, giving to the campaign the appellation, The War of the Roses. But in spite of being political opponents, the brothers never lost their regard for each other so that they both expressed and helped heal some of the postwar wounds. They traveled on the campaign trail together, played the fiddle, treated the crowds to their colorful 19th century oratory and played pranks such as stealing each other's speeches. Although Bob defeated Alf in that round, both brothers had long political careers filled with a bewildering variety of high offices.

The family story builds to a crescendo in "Our Bob and Alf," with subsequent generations coping with the shadows thrown by their predecessors. Taylor's grandfather, for one, realizes that if he stays in Tennessee, he will inevitably become "the hero of a divine romance," and hoping to have a chance at being his own man, he takes his bride west to live in the Indian Territory that was shortly to become Oklahoma.

But this is not the book to read to get a feeling for the period or for the issues of the day. The characters do not come across as flesh and blood people as much as vivid figments of the novelist's imagination. Although Taylor's voice occasionally comes up for air and recites a few facts, the tone is mostly dream-like. He gives us the thoughts and feelings of his forebears, many times when they themselves are in such a trance that they are not certain whether they have actually

spoken the words going through their minds out loud. The language often is a more restrained version of Bob's florid, powerful oratory or an old-style chanted sermon. Often the words are used, not so much for their meaning, but for their sound, their imagery, their rhythm, continuing the family's generations-long struggle to, as Alf puts it, make words music. For example, a passage describes the thoughts of Bob's mother, Emma, as she lies waiting to die:

> In the end . . . only division signified, only separation matters and makes the terrible circling of our blood a heavenward journey. Going nowhere, we set forth, we soar, say we have come down to earth. In our extremities—let me say it—in my extremity I reach as close to sky as I will ever. Sun and moon measure me good. Blood kills me, the spirit willing. And the spirit wills it.

At times, the poetic language verges on the sentimental and the overly romantic. I found a couple of the courtships a little more splendid than anything I've ever seen in real life.

The author is at his best when he describes, with great power and veracity, the deaths of parents and the grief of their surviving children. In fact the last illnesses and deaths of parents get more than their share of space. Generations of sons are solemnly told that with the passing of a father, the family's hopes rest in them. Daughters know that something is expected of them but can't quite fathom what that something is exactly. In one particularly affecting passage, Taylor's grandmother has recurring dreams in which her recently deceased father comes back. They have perfectly ordinary visits with each other, just as long as she tactfully avoids mentioning the fact that he's dead.

I began to suspect that it was no coincidence that Taylor's own father, pictured in its last pages as a character on the brink of marriage and fatherhood, died two years before the novel's publication. The book does not read really like a novel or a history. It is instead an elegy, written out of the deep grief experienced upon the death of a parent. The novel is the product of the very personal and profoundly heightened sense of mortality and family that results when someone vanishes whom of course you knew would die someday but who had always been there from the moment of your birth.

A research associate at the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services, Jane Harris Woodside holds M.A. degrees in both English literature and folklore.

Rural Community in the Appalachian South

Patricia Duane Beaver

University Press of Kentucky
Lexington, Ky. 1986
$18.00 (hardcover)

Richard Blaustein

This careful ethnographic study of three mountain communities in Western North Carolina sensitively delineates overlapping networks of symbolic and emotional relationships which pervade Appalachian rural life. A talented narrative writer as well as a thoughtful cultural anthropologist, Patricia Beaver's portrayal of these communities provides a satisfying balance between lucid description and rigorous ethnographic analysis.

Beaver knows her people well and obviously cares a great deal about them, but at no point does she lapse into romanticism or sentimentality. The portrait of rural Appalachia which emerges from this work is considerably more dynamic and complex than familiar stereotypes would lead us to believe. Rather than being isolated and inbred, these communities are surprisingly diversified and have become increasingly so with the influx of summer residents and back-to-the-landers which has continued since the early 1970s.

Kinship is a primary organizing principle in these mountain communities. Newcomers are initially treated with caution (rather than suspicion or hostility). New arrivals who show respect and appreciation for long-term residents will eventually find themselves treated as friends or even assigned quasi-kinship roles.

As Beaver observes, the Appalachian notion of kinship extends beyond literal blood ties. It is an idiom for ideal forms of social interaction: mutual support, solidarity and reciprocity. There are equally strong proclivities towards egalitarianism and individualism. As long as newcomers satisfy communal expectations regarding neighborly behavior—they must show respect for their neighbors and their property—they are otherwise free to conduct their personal business without comment or interference. Anyone who is "common," that is to say, down-to-earth and unpretentious, will be tolerated by the community. People who "get above their raising," or otherwise show contempt for local social values, will evoke negative reciprocity ranging from gossip to vandalism. Despite the widespread reputation that mountain people have gained for physical brutality toward outsiders, it is the insider, who encroaches on the dignity and self-esteem of family members and relatives who is most likely to be the target of violent retribution.

And even this sort of fratricidal violence is the exception rather than the norm. For the most part, this is a society which places a surprisingly high value on gentleness. There are few repressive restrictions on its babies. Adult males show open affection for children without fear of losing masculine dignity.

Because of economic changes, it has also become a society whose women have moved into the realm of education and public employment more rapidly and willingly than its men. This has resulted in a new lifestyle that combines rural residence with participation in the larger bureaucratic industrial world.

Beaver does not deny that these mountain communities have their problems and tensions. Some reflect the continuing deterioration of the American family farm situation in general; others are caused by inherent contradictions and double-binds which hinder communication in any human society.

Richard Blaustein is a folklorist and director of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services at East Tennessee State University.

Reviews

Ultimately it is this sense of human universality which Beaver conveys so effectively in this ethnography that makes the book a valuable contribution to the study of a regional culture that is prone to stereotyping and sensationalism. Modest and understated, *Rural Community in the Appalachian South* nonetheless deserves the serious attention of anyone who is looking for a realistic and positive treatment of the everyday lives of contemporary mountain people.

Beech Creek: A Study of a Kentucky Mountain Neighborhood

by James S. Brown

Berea College Press
College Box 2353
Berea, Ky. 40404 1988
$20.00 (hardcover)

Patrick D. Reagan

Social science research plays an important but little-known role in our understanding of modern America. From the 1920s through the 1940s, scholars used the community study method to make sense of broader developments. Among the most famous of these projects was Robert and Helen Lynd's Middletown studies of Muncie, Ind. (1929, 1937); W. Lloyd Warner's Yankee City Series on Newburyport, Mass. (1941-1947); and John Dollard's 1937 study of race relations in the small Southern town of Indianola, Miss. At the same time, the new field of regional sociology began studying rural communities.

Recent works in Appalachian studies remind us that the mountain communities of the upper South have been little studied on their own terms. Appalachian locales need to be examined, understood and respected in all their cultural diversity.

Beech Creek contains the results of a lifetime of personal experience, field research and thought about a small, mountain neighborhood in Southeastern Kentucky near where author James S. Brown grew up.

Brown conducted field research on 30 families in Beech Creek during 1942 and 1943. As an observer-participant, Brown brought a unique perspective to his study of this isolated subsistence farming community. Son of a local YMCA director, Brown grew up in Eastern Kentucky coal camps before studying economics at his father's alma mater, Berea College. After false starts in economics and sociology at Yale, Brown entered graduate study in the new rural sociology program at Harvard, working with such prominent scholars as Pitirim Sorokin, Carle Zimmerman, Talcott Parsons and Clyde Kluckhohn. For his doctoral dissertation, Brown chose to study Beech Creek, which would allow him to combine his personal, intellectual and cultural interests. *Beech Creek* is a slightly revised form of the Harvard dissertation finished in 1950.

In detailing family life, farm work and cultural values of Beech Creek, Brown captures elements of this pre-industrial, family-oriented society. He notes the role of familial values, extended kinship structures and class differences in property ownership, child rearing, education, work patterns, economic assets and religious customs. He argues that Beech Creek had remained untouched by the changes that were rapidly transforming the rest of the nation. This work provides an in-depth look at a relatively isolated mountain community before it was forever changed by migration during World War II. Brown's extensive discussion (today we would call it oral history) with the ordinarily closemouthed local peoples caught some of the social reality of a pre-industrial community without engaging in romanticization of that world as happens in some of the new social histories.

Although his research would be updated in the early 1960s and institutionalized through the work of the Appalachian Center at the University of Kentucky founded in the late 1970s, Brown's work has certain limitations for today's readers. His sociological method was taken from leading works of the 1930s and 1940s, many written by his Harvard mentors. Brown's definition of culture, reflecting the predominant scholarly view, was a static one that failed to explain how culture changed over time.

In retrospect, the study failed to account for the historical changes that even Brown realized in the mid-1940s were already overtaking Beech Creek. Contrary to various myths about Appalachia, the mountain South was changed by the onslaught of a modernizing economy, as Ronald Eller has pointed out in *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers,* published by the University of Tennessee Press in 1982.

Parts of *Beech Creek* sound quite fresh in light of the interests of the new social history which emphasizes the importance of understanding social groups in their own cultural terms. Lately, social historians have turned their attention to the study of the unique culture of the mountain South. Brown, recently retired from the University of Kentucky's sociology department, raised questions that others are taking up only now. As revealed in a moving afterward, Brown struggled for 40 years trying both to maintain his roots in this culture and to make it more understandable to others with the best tools of 20th century social science.

Patrick D. Reagan teaches history at Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville. He is the author of "Workers Face Industrialization: The Nation and the Community Levels," in ***Tennessee in American History****.*

Recommended Reading

Images of Appalachian Coalfields is a collection of Builder Levy's black and white photographs of coal mines and the communities around them in West Virginia, Kentucky and Pennsylvania in the 1970s and 1980s. The pictures show an unromantic reality, yet they are beautiful. A miner stands casually among awesome gleaming machinery in a coal mine. A young woman looks across a counter in the restaurant where she works. A group playing baseball is dwarfed by a chemical plant that is itself dwarfed by a steep mountainside. The reproductions of the photographs are superb duotones on high-quality paper. Helen Matthews Lewis provides an introduction that could serve as a short course on the history of the coalfields of Appalachia. Temple University Press should be commended for producing such a well-crafted book. It was published by Temple University Press in 1989 and costs $24.95 in hardcover.

—Pat Arnow

Newfound, Jim Wayne Miller's first novel, provides a fresh perspective on the growing-up years of an Appalachian youth. A widely-published Kentucky poet, Miller creates haunting images— from the opening description of Robert Wells' parents to Robert's ultimate decision to leave the hollow that he loves.

Of significant interest to adolescents (Orchard Books' intended audience) will be Miller's treatment of divorce, the laying of blame and fading hope of reconciliation. Equally valuable is the portrait of the boy's relationship to his father, a footloose gambler who even plays with the contents of his children's piggybank. A constant theme is the rural initiation into manhood, scenes of Robert's first night hunting with his male Newfound neighbors, his first crush, his first day at a regional school and the gloriously humorous Future Farmers of America initiation.

That Jim Wayne Miller is a poet is evident from the lyrical language of this novel and the mythic quality that imbues it, but it is a work highly accessible to young readers. And Miller's characters are graced with dignity, a sense of sharing and the rewards of honest labor.

The novel is reminiscent of the works of Ralph Moody in his *Little Britches* or the poet/novelist Jesse Stuart whose early work dealt with the mountain region of Kentucky. It is a quiet novel; the most dramatic scene is a dangerous hailstorm and the most violent comes when Grandpa Smith's dog is caught in the boy's trap. But Miller creates a compelling world underlayered by the ever-present threat of strip mining and its devastating effect on Newfound. I would recommend *Newfound* to readers of any age. It was published in 1989 by Orchard Books and sells for $13.95 in hardcover.

—Carolyn Page

A Sense of the Morning: ***Inspiring Reflections On Nature And Discovery*** is a new book by David Brendan Hopes, an Asheville, N.C., resident and naturalist.

A Sense of the Morning is not a straightforward narrative, or a collection of essays, but as the subtitle suggests, "reflections," or a somewhat loose collection of stories that read like leaves from a naturalist's diary. If the work has a weakness, it is that it is sometimes difficult to follow Hopes' train of thought since he relies heavily on abstract ideas and aphorism and is seldom bothered by the need for transitions.

Nevertheless, Hopes successfully conjures sights and sounds either long forgotten or endangered by indifference. His stories about the warblers and the ovenbirds, the bright orange salamanders, and even one about the song of the skunk are memorable. Together they carry a positive message, first for the world's endangered creatures, for he will not defend a facile and arrogant orthodoxy that would deny them attributes of the "more intelligent" species; and second, for the individual, whose every sensitivity to nature's creatures and their environs has merit.

Hopes brings an immense learning to these accounts of his treks in the wild, so readers of Loren Eisley and Barry Lopez should find this work of interest. Dodd, Mead and Company publishes *A Sense of the Morning* for $18.95. It is also available in paperback from Simon and Schuster for $8.95.

—Bryan Culp

Mary Pearl Kline is Patricia Shirley's expanded version of an earlier poetry collection, *Pearl*. This new collection not only has all the features that made the original *Pearl* delightful—history depicted through three generations, accurate Appalachian dialect, humor and wisdom—but expands the original cast of characters and deepens the reader's understanding of and appreciation for the Appalachian (and human) spirit. It is a major achievement for a serious, painstaking poet. The 98-page soft cover book is published by Seven Buffaloes Press, Box 249, Big Timber, Montana 59011 and sells for $6.75 postpaid.

— Ed Davis

Carolyn Page is the editor of ***Potato Eyes****, a literary arts journal from Troy, Maine, focusing on Appalachian writers.*

Bryan Culp is an editorial assistant with ***Now and Then*** *and a master's candidate in history at ETSU.*

Ed Davis teaches English and Appalachian Folklore at Sinclair Community College in Dayton.

"Thus He Perished." (Note the hands to the left of the boat.) Headstone of William H. Cox, Jonesborough, Tenn. The inscription reads, "Midshipman U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md. BORN OCTR 25, 1855 Accidentally Drowned near Annapolis APRIL 14, 1875."

Epitaphs

by Louis S. Schafer

If you are inclined to visit aging graveyards while traveling through Appalachia, you may find some unexpected ironies, wit and poetry on the gravestones.

The grave of Sam Will Smith, for example, still stands in Shippensburg, Pa. A single stone was used to commemorate four other unnamed family members:

This lovely boy near 8 years old,
Lies Buried with his Brother
His Sister lies on the one side
And his Nephew on the other

Accidental death isn't usually commemorated on the tombstone, but on the edge of the Pennsylvania Appalachians, in Old Ross Park Cemetery, Williamsport, is an epitaph dedicated to Henry Harris, who "went to the world where horses don't kick."

The following piece of questionable advice can be found on a Knoxville, Tenn., tombstone:

She lived a life of virtue and died of the cholera morbus, caused by eating green fruit
in hope of a blessed immortality.
Reader, go thou and do likewise.

Strange Creek, W.Va., got its name from William Strange, who was separated from the rest of his surveying party in 1795. His bleached bones were discovered several years later near a tree, against which his gun still rested. On the bark Strange had written his own epitaph:

Strange is my name and I'm on Strange ground
And Strange it is I can't be found.

Misspelling makes this epitaph to Gertrude Walker in the John Walker Cemetery, near White Horn, Tenn., interesting: *"Gone to be an angle."*

And the following was etched into a gravestone found in New Gray Cemetery, Knoxville, Tenn.: *"Anything for a change."*

Snipe Hunting
(30's Style)

Bicycling alone
over washboard
hidden between
screens of corn
eyes alert
for snipes

finding one fallen
since Monday's rain
a Lucky Strike
long enough to light
from first burst
of kitchen match

drawing flavor
like pin feathers
mother singed
off Sunday hens.

—Glenn McKee

Song for Spring

While peas
swell and pop
we eat—

Lettuce, radishes
broccoli
and spinach.

Drunk at the feast
we plant
for summer

Our backs
bent
to earth and sun.

All winter we'll eat
tomatoes
green beans

And if we must
squash
squash
and squash.

—Connie J. Green

*Glenn McKee, of Waterville, Maine, has had poetry in **Appalachian Heritage**, **Back Home in Kentucky** and **Grab-a-Nickel**.*

*Connie J. Green teaches at the University of Tennessee and Roane State Community College. Her novel, **The War At Home**, was recently published by Macmillan.*

Louis S. Schafer is a writer in Winn, Mich.

Music

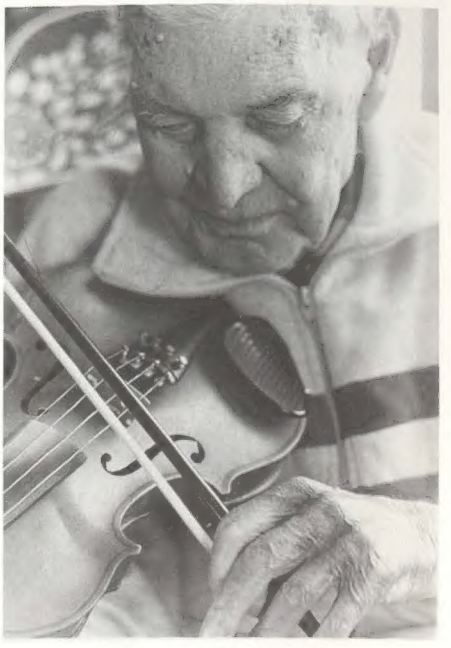
This past Christmas Day I had the opportunity to visit Charlie Osborne, better known as Uncle Charlie. I visited Uncle Charlie at his home in Russell County, Va., on the Big Moccasin Creek side of that county. It was the eve of his 99th birthday, and he was saving up his appetite for his annual birthday dinner that included groundhog. (If you've not tasted groundhog, the word is, if you can get them young, then they're nice and tender and not so gamy tasting as when they get older.)

Uncle Charlie plays the fiddle left handed, and in his younger days he played the banjo which he made out of green willows and cat skin. When he was growing up, people living in the country made their own musical instruments just as they sewed their own clothes and provided their own food. Like so many old-time musicians, Charlie learned to play from his dad and his grandfather. Influences came from travels Uncle Charlie made around the surrounding rural area, giving him the opportunity to hear other musicians.

My visit at Uncle Charlie's was delightful. The view from his picture window of a big rolling hill—snow covered and dotted with cattle—only enhanced the warmth and hospitality of his home. After a sip or two of some good whiskey, Charlie got his fiddle out, and I got a guitar tuned up and we proceeded to play some of Charlie's favorite tunes: "Ida Red," "Cotton Eyed Joe," "Sourwood Mountain," "Browns Dream," "Sugar In The Gourd," and "The Little Brown Jug."

"The Little Brown Jug" pops up in just about every musician's repertoire. In many cases this tune is one of the first many musicians learn to play and sing. "The Old Brown Jug," is an old minstrel show tune dating back to 1869.

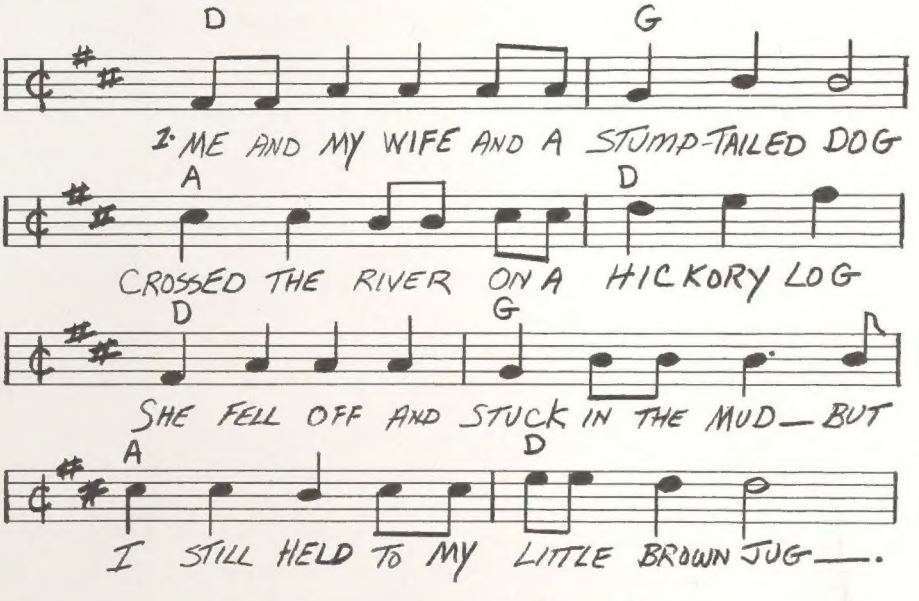
—Ed Snodderly



Uncle Charlie Osborne. Photo by Dawn Scott

The Little Brown Jug

James Eastburn Winner



1.
Me and my wife and a stump-tailed dog
Crossed the river on a hickory log
She fell off and stuck in the mud--but
I still held to my little brown jug

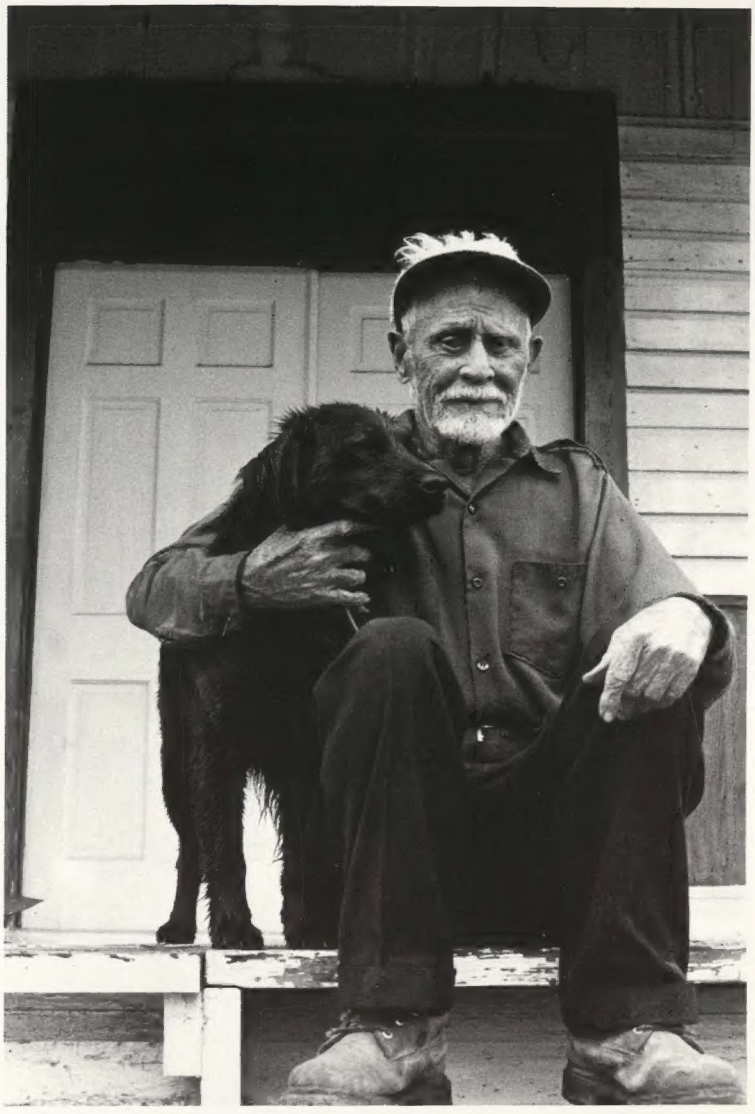
Chorus:
Ha, ha, ha! you and me
Little brown jug, don't I love thee
Ha, ha, ha, you and me
Little brown jug, don't I love thee

2.
I reached over and give 'er pull
Little brown jug about half full
Here you are, so near my nose
Tip 'er up and down she goes

3.
I went out to view my farm
Little brown jug was under my arm
Hitched my mule in the shade of a tree
Little brown jug in the shade of me

Uncle Charlie Osborne plays and sings "The Little Brown Jug" on his June Appal Recording, ***Relics & Treasures****. This record was produced by Tom Bledsoe and includes an excellent booklet full of information on Uncle Charlie and the 15 songs and tunes he's recorded here.*

From JAO49. June Appal Records, Whitesburg, Ky., 1985.



Gap Creek, 1989
Photo by Jenny Lokey

Sadie's Store

She spreads mayonnaise on Kern's
bread and cuts thick slices
of pure beef bologna.

Talk of tobacco pushing canvas off plant beds
hangs in the smoke-filled room.
Case, Old Timer, Tree Brand swap hands.

Practiced fingers measure
metal, sharpness, and weight.
Sadie knows her sandwiches are a sore sight
compared to the chicken and dumplings,
buttermilk biscuits, and egg custard pies
farm women used to serve.

But until their working wives come home
toting fat pocketbooks and canned biscuits,
these men eat bologna sandwiches

and farm real big in front
of the potbellied stove
at Sadie's Store.

—Gretchen McCroskey

Jenny Lokey is a photography major at East Tennessee State University.

Gretchen McCroskey teaches English in Bristol, Va. Her poems have appeared in ***Mountain Ways, The New River Free Press*** *and* ***Now and Then.***

Cartoons, pages 2 and 37: Tony Feathers teaches art in Greeneville, Tenn.

Photographers, pages 20, 21: Vickie Carter Quigg, a video producer at ETSU, has an MA from Appalachian State University and comes from Wise County, Va.

Randy Ball is a freelance photographer from Rogersville, Tenn.

Photo Page 26: Kenneth Murray is a photographer who focuses on the region. He is a frequent contributor to ***Now and Then.***

Telford, Tenn., 1989. Photo by Jenny Lokey.

NOW AND THEN

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